



**A CRITICAL STUDY OF ART AND THOUGHT OF
RABINDRANATH TAGORE WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO ITS INFLUENCE ON
CONTEMPORARY PAINTERS**

THESIS

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Abstract



Abstract

The art of India is a unique chapter in the history of human endeavor. It is essential to have some appreciation of it in order to understand the soul of India. Here is this section; we shall try to discuss Rabindranath Tagore's main contribution to art and the theme of his literary and artistic activities. Rabindranath Tagore was one of the greatest literary and artistic figures of universal love and brotherhood through his artistic genius. Rabindranath Tagore life has been eminently such a life of thoughts and of action in accordance with his thought. He is the greatest poet and prose writer. In Bengal, Rabindranath has played a great part in the unfolding of our national potentialities. He has made the Bengalees articulate and he has made them awake to the situation all around. Rabindranath's writing has worked myriads. His poems and songs are so popular in Bengal that they are in the lips of every child thus form childhood Uttar Pradesh.

The first chapter of the thesis deals primarily with the concept of art with regard to its origin, definitions, nature, purpose and types. The origin of art dates back to antiquity. In the few centuries before and after the birth of Christ, art flourished greatly in India under royal patronage. During the Mughal rule a synthesis took place between the Indian and the Mughal art. The western art came to India during the British rule. It also made a great impact on the Indian art and as a result of this impact, the modern art was born.

Significant contributions to the Indian art come from such pioneers as Raja Ravi Verma, E.B.Havell, Nandlal Bose, Abanindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil and others. The greatest contribution, however, was made by the legendary figure Rabindranath Tagore, who enriched every field of art with his ingenious skill and philosophy. Due to the combined efforts of these artists the Indian art was raised to the international level.

It is argued that art should better not be defined because such an endeavour would delimit it much in the same manner as trimming of a free to

make a log for classroom study. As already discussed, the history of art is as old as that of man. The English word 'Art' means skills, dexterity or craftsmanship. The most widely used divisions of art are the 'Fine' and the 'Useful'. The 'Modern' art is largely related to creative pleasure painting. Art is created by mental and physical craftsmanship. An artist is a creator who derives pleasure from his endeavour. According to Tagore, "art is the expression of the universal through the individual." Every artist nurses a vision and is gifted with a keen sensitiveness. Art is the medium through which his emotional experience and moral judgments seek their outlet. Through the release of his surplus creative and emotional energy, he satisfies his mental hunger and gains a status of equilibrium with the outer world.

In Second Chapter described the development and movement of Bengal School and contribution of E.B.Havell, Abanindranath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore. Bengal was the hub of some very significant transformation in the field of art and Culture in the early 19th century. A new dimension to art was assigned and the Bengal School of Art was established in Calcutta. Calcutta had become the fortress city, not only for traditional art and literature but also for major eventful political activity. Indian art of culture were for the first time taken seriously of given due recognition by the west.

Some of the western stalwarts like E.B. Havell contributed immensely to the revival of Indian art. He was a strong proponent of the renewal of the existing system of Indian art rather than being completely influenced by the western style. The art of painting of craftsmanship flourished under his period of attracted many youngsters into the field. Besides, Havell had influenced one of the forerunners of the Tagore family, Abanindranath Tagore, who himself was a great artists. Under his auspices, the Indian School his auspices, the Indian School of Art was founded, wherein besides painting; training in handloom was also provided; thus serving as a vocational exercise for those involved worldwide aulain and critics' recognition. The contribution; of the Tagore family to the field of Indian art is simply immeasurable, and needless to

mention; Rabindranath Tagore was amongst the pioneers in this gallery of greats. Rabindranath Tagore, the painter, the poet; the musician; and the writer. He was a gifted personality with a wealth of talents. He was a child prodigy who carved his rich in the world by his sheer dedication and Commitment to the cause of Indian art of literature. Our National Anthem has been adopted from one of his famous writings. He was the first Indian to receive the prestigious Nobel Prize for his work in the field of literature. *Santiniketan*; a name not new to anyone; founded by him is a like a mighty tree with several branches of offshoots under the shade of which countless number of people learn to be socially of economically productive members of the society. His name will always be written in golden letters in the history of Indian art and literature.

Third Chapter explains of his Social thoughts and his poetry and letters. Rabindranath Tagore; with his multifaceted personality had made a significant impact on the lives of the common man. Not just did he excel in painting and poetry; but also; with his unflinching efforts; and by ways direct or indirect; he should be credited as a major force behind social upliftment and emancipation; especially of the women. Tagore challenged the existing dogmas and traditions that plagued the lives of the women community of that period: namely the plight of widows: the dowry system; and female illiteracy. He used the might of his pen to divert world's attention to the utmost pathetic state of affairs of women. Tagore had great respect for humanity; and individual; but held society above the individual. He strongly decried and disfavoured society above the existing gap between the rich of poor; and encouraged the underprivileged to develop small-scale economy systems like craftsmanship of agriculture for their livelihood.

He was a proponent of female literacy and believed that the standard of education for men & women be no different. He channelised his views of opinions into action by opening the world-renowned institutes of *Santiniketan*. The *Sriniketan* of *Visva-Bharati* were to follow soon in the same Noble

endeavour of this great thespian. The *Nari Bhavan* was a further attempt at bridging the gender gap in terms of education of vocation. Girls were taught to be more aware of self reliant.

The Chapter deals Tagore's poetic skies need no introduction. He is well known as the poet of love; the name poet and the romantic poet who expressed ideas so beautifully in his compositions; which besides being simple; had always carried a message for the society. The *Sandhya Sangit & Prabhat Sangit* are his well acclaimed compositions, and who can forest his immortal *Gitanjali*. He was the true son of India from whom the generation of yesteryears and the generation of today have gained a lot. He was an institution in himself and his works have registered themselves forever in the history of India.

In **Fourth Chapter** define Rabindranath Tagore's approach to Aesthetic theory and his painting resembles of the children art and also define unconsciousness and rhythm of his paintings. This chapter explains Tagore found an inspiration from the work of Klee by being "abstract" and yet being representative of nature and its eternal beauty. The "Aesthetic Approach of has been so well appreciated that it has been adopted as a branch of philosophy. It dealt with the artist's own perception of nature and its beauty and its inculcation in the form of painting. It thus, did not take much time for Tagore's work to gain due recognition of importance, both in India and abroad.

Tagore's Paintings appeared amateurish to the novice and were referred to as work of "child art". This was because the pictures were more of artistic than being symbolic, but lately it was appreciated that the same was a most unique form of art and that of self expression, at large. Rabindranath Tagore did not have any formal training as a painter; yet his paintings fetched world wide recognition of acclaim as a self composed style of imagery which was though "child like" but not "childish". His work was however criticized in the writings of the then stalwart like Professor Sarkar and Archer.

The Chapter also deals by personal technique, he produced many pictures and perceived that expression of rhythm was only real fact for a painting. Rhythm is the essential part of all his works. Tagore's versatile genius brought forth a perfect homogeneity among the different fine arts through the medium or rhythm. There could hardly be any parallel to this versatility in the history of art and literature in the world.

Fifth Chapter goes on to discuss of contemporaries painters, who had played great role independent of Bengal renaissance. They were Nandlal Bose, Amrita Sher-Gil, and Asit Kumar Haldar. In the legacy of the greats in the field of Indian painting was another name, that of Nandlal Bose. Born in a small village in Bengal. Nandalal was a child prodigy who learnt the intricacies of art and painting, watching his mother making things at home. Nandalal became a worthy disciple of Abanindranath; read books on the lives of thespians in the field of art and inculcated the positive points in his work. Nandalal was particularly influenced by Rabindranath Tagore and the *Santiniketan*. He believed *Santiniketan* granted the most congenial atmosphere for the growth of a budding artiste. The originality of maturity of Nandalal's paintings won him National of International acclaim. He used to paint Religion and mythological icons with great deft.

Amrita Sher-Gil deserves a special mention in this era of renaissance of Indian art. Not just because she was a woman, but because she was a woman with difference and a woman under substance. She was a blend of two cultures; as her father was Indian and mother of Hungarian origin. Human figures and painting human anatomy in vivid colours was her area of special interest. Her paintings were expressive of human emotions and were symbolic of Indian day to day life and peoples' feelings. She is believed to be one of the world's greatest colorists of her time.

Asit Kumar Haldar was a great nephew of Rabindranath Tagore and likewise was a multitalented personality. He was an artist's a poet; an art critic and a philosopher too. He was the force behind establishment of

the *Kala Bhavan* in *Santiniketan*. This is because, these great artists contribution of Indian Art are remarkable.

So in **conclusion**, many discussion of literature's effect on readers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour how focused on literary content as only a collection of facts. For example, researchers who have considered the impact of violent content of have often examined only the presence or absence of violence. To suggest that, in addition, researchers should be attentive to the ways in which the unfolding of cause and consequences in literary narratives affect is reader plans and expectation for their own day to day experiences, in particular, readers may apply intuitive theories of literary aesthetic to their own life story. Though the world and India have changed considerably since the days of Tagore, they have not changed wholly. At present, though the ideal of Rabindranath is vibrating in the memory of Indian people, it is becoming difficult day by day. But his great personality would always have great importance an account of his literary genius. At the present day he is important on account also of many other gifts. Indeed, there are probably very few living men who have exhibited such remarkable versatility to keep up his high ideal of preserve his tradition to adverse circumstances.

**DEDICATED
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Certificate

This is to certify that **Ms. Seema Rani** has completed her Ph.D. thesis on the topic ***"A Critical Study of Art and Thought of Rabindranath Tagore with Special Reference to Its Influence on Contemporary Painters"*** under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge the thesis contains her original research work and is worthy of submission for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Fine Arts of the A.M.U., Aligarh.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seema'.

Prof. Seema Javed
Supervisor

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(Ms. Seema Rani.)

Introduction





Rabindranath Tagore

General Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the *Upanishads*.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7th May 1861, in the Joransanko village of Calcutta (presently Kolkata). His genius enriched what-ever it touched, like the sun after which he was named (Rabi in Bengali derived from *Sanskrit ravi*, means Sun), he shed light and warmth on his age, vitalized the mental and moral soul of his land, revealed unknown horizons of thought and spanned the arch that divided the East from the West.

Tagore was the fourteenth child in a family of fifteen, but he grew up as the youngest member in the household, because his younger sibling died early. He lost his mother, Sarada Devi, in adolescence, and his father travelled frequently to distant places, including the Himalayas, on various spiritual quests and other places and could not spare much time to look after his brilliant Child. Meanwhile Tagore was mostly confined to the family compound. He was forbidden to leave it for any purpose other than going to school. Tagore grew up under the supervision of servants or "servocracy". In his *Reminiscences*, he humorously recollects how these servants were negligent and oppressive; to avoid their responsibility. They would often put the boy at a spot in the servant's quarter, draw a chalk line around him, and warn him with a solemn face and uplifted finger of the perils of transgressing the "Circles". In this way Tagore spent his early days of his childhood in fear and agony. According to psychologists Tagore's child art may be a reflection of his own infancy days.

Rabindranath Tagore's school career was brief (1868-74), uneventful and haphazard. He had to change school four times at least. He received his

early education first from tutors. He did not react favorably to set lessons. The generally unruly conduct of his name did not appear in the list of candidates promoted to the next higher class of St. Xavier's School, and he was withdrawn from school. At University College, London, he was sent to study law' but returned after a year, without finishing his studies, because he could not cope with the English weather, or bear to live away for long from the sights and sounds of Bengal, his native place.

In England Tagore started to compose the poem ('Bhagna Haridaj'), with a broken heart. He started writing at the age of eight, and engaged himself with such a young age that by the time he was eighteen he had written 7 000 lines / verses. Tagore's literary awakening came from reading the old Bengali poets, Chandidas and Vidyapati. He also got his inspiration from the early *Vaishnava* religious literature. When he was twelve or thirteen, he reveled in the beauty of this early Bengali poetry and, with his precocity of youth, imitated their style and published some poems under the name of "Bhanu Sinha".

In 1883, Tagore married Mrinalini Devi Raichaudhuri, with whom he had two sons and three daughters. Towards the ends of 1890, returning from England, he was entrusted by his father with the management of the extensive family estates in the Rajshai district with his headquarters at Shailads. By the end of the century, Rabindranath Tagore was preoccupied more and more with the fundamental of the Indian problems and his growing conviction that these were tied up with the prevailing faulty system of education. Instead of sending his own children to the existing school - where it might become possible to link up learning and living in an atmosphere of freedom in the midst of nature- in a community where teachers would be Gurus and pupils discipline in the traditional Upanishad sense. He held up these ideas in the poems of Naivedya and followed them up by founding a school in the *Asrama* built by his father at Santiniketan near Bolpur and bequeathed by him to a public trust in 1901.

Between 1893 and 1900 he wrote seven volumes of poetry, including, its Sonar Tari (the Golden Boat), 1894.

This was highly productive period in Tagore's life and earned him rather misleading epitaph "The Bengali Shelly". Tagore was the first Indian to bring an element of psychological realism to his novels. If he had been nothing more than a poet and writer, the quality and out put of his contribution to his people's language and literature would still entitle him to be remembered as one of the world's truly great immortals and great literary figures. But he was some thing much more .He was artist in life. His personal life was as clean and noble as his verse is simple and beautiful. He lived as he wrote, not for pleasure or profit but out of joy, not as brilliant egoist but as a dedicated spirit. He was fully conscious that his genius was a gift from the Divine, and it should be used in the service to humanity.

In 1901 Tagore founded a school outside Calcutta, under the title: "*Visva Bharti*", which was dedicated to emerging Western and Indian philosophy and education. It became a University in 1921. This is because he was a pioneer in the field of education. For the last forty years of his life he preferred to be a schoolmaster in humble and calm rural surroundings, even after he had achieved fame such as no Indian had known before. He was the first in India to think out for himself in practice. His formulated certain important principles of education which are now common in the places of education and theory. Tagore's reputation as a writer was established in the United States and in England after the publication of *Gitanjali*, which in under songs offerings, about Divine and human life. He also composed wonderful songs based on nature, child and women. Politically active in India, Tagore was a supporter of Gandhi and tradition of peace and non-violence, but warned of the dangers nationalistic thoughts. Between the years 1961 and 1934 he traveled widely. From his journey to Japan in 1961 he produced articles and books. In 1927 he toured in South East Asia from Japan, which first was serialized in Vichitra, was issued as a book *Jalri*, in 1929. His Majesty, Raza

Shah Phalavi, invited Tagore to Iran in 1932. On his journeys and lecture tours, Tagore attempted to spread the ideal of Uniting East and West.

Rabindranath Tagore was one of the liberals who turned to the support of child marriage, on a nationalist wave to reclaim Hindu tradition. Tagore refused to receive the Nobel Prize. Today this experience would be more common that people feel proud to have it. He was one of the great minds of India who gave expressions to the soul in the Sub-continent, which was under turmoil and hopeless situations. He composed the National Anthem of our country. Two years later he was awarded the knighthood, but he surrendered it in 1919 as a protest against the Massacre of Amritsar, where British Troop killed 400 Indian demonstrators. In 1940, the Oxford University arranged a special ceremony in *Santiniketan* to honor Tagore with the title, Doctorate of literature, but he did not accept that. So he was no doubt primarily a poet, but he was also an actor, educationist, cultural reformer, philosopher, novelist, short-story writer, and a critic of life politics, art and literature. His last visit to lecture was at Sri Lanka in the year 1941. Tagore's health had seriously deteriorated, and he passed away on 7th August, 1941. But his beauty, creative genius and excellence are still alive in his works and deep inside the soul of people. Not only Indians do love and admire Tagore, he remained an inspiring figure for all citizens of the globe. His art and thought as well as other creative efforts are equally relevant for the twenty-first century human world.

Chronology:

- 1861- Rabindranath Tagore born May 7 at Joransanko, Calcutta; fourteenth child (8th son) of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi.
- 1866- Begins learning Bengali alphabet.
- 1868- Admitted to Oriental Seminary, then to Normal School.
- 1869- First attempt at versification.
- 1871- Admitted to Bengal Akademi; begins truancy from school.
- 1872- First acquaintance with rural Bengal.
- 1873- First visit to *Santiniketan*; tours North India; spends three months with his father in Himalayas; returns to Bengal Akademi, which he leaves at end of year.
- 1875- First public appearance, reciting patriotic poem at Hindu Mela (Fair); first poem Published; leaves St. Xavier's School at end of year.
- 1876- Publishes first literary criticism; first visit to Shelaidaha.
- 1877- First stage appearance in comedy based on Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, by brother Jyotirindranath; contributes poems, including *Bhanusingherpadavali* (Songs of Bhanusingha), to journal *Bhārati*, founded by brother Dwijiendranath.
- 1878- Studies English with brother Satyendranath in Ahemedabad; compose first musical setting for his own poems; goes to England with Satyendranath; attends school at Brighton.
- 1879- Admitted to University College, London, and studies English literature under Henery Morley; contribute *Europe Prabasir patra* (Letters of a Traveler in Europe) to *Bhārati*; begins first verse drama.
- 1880- Returns to India (February) without completing studies.
- Composes first devotional Songs; first musical play, *Valmiki-Pratibha* (The Genius of Balmiki) in which he has title role; first polemical writing on England 's opium trade in China; fist public lecture; sails for England but turns back at Madras.
- 1882- Publishes *Sandhya Sangit* (Evening Songs).

- 1883- Publishes *Prabhat Sangit* (Morning Songs); marries Mrinalini Devi, of Jessore.
- 1884- Writes first prose drama, *Nālini*.
- 1885- publishes *rabichchaya* (Sunlight and Shade) first song collection.
- 1888- Publishes *Samalochanā* (Discussion) first collection of his essays in literary criticism.
- 1889- Writes *Rājā o Rāni* (King and Queen), first five-act drama.
- 1890- Takes charge of Tagore estates in East Bengal; second visit to England (August – November).
- 1891- First short stories Published; launches monthly, *Sāadhanā*.
- 1894- Becomes editor of *Sāadhanā*; publishes *Soṇār Tori* (The Golden Boat).
- 1897- Tries in vain to have Bengal Provincial Conference conducted in Bengali; returns to Calcutta.
- 1898- Becomes editor of *Bhārati*.
- 1900- Publishes *Kshanikā*.
- 1901- Revives the monthly, *Bāngadarshan*, which he edits until 1906; moves family from Shelaidaha to *Santiniketan* and opens school there publishes *Naibedya*.
- 1910- Publishes *Bengal Gitanjali* in London. William Rothenstein initiates organization of India Society, then leaves for India.
- 1911- Rothenstein visit Calcutta, meets Rabindranath through artist nephews Abanindranath and Gaganendranath.
- 1914- C.F.Andrew joins Santiniketan staff.
- 1915- Gandhi arrives from South Africa, goes to *Santiniketan*; Rabindranath is knighted.
- 1916- Publishes *Bālakā*.
- 1918- On December 22, lays foundation-stone for *Visva-Bharti* University at *Santiniketan*.
- 1920- Lectures in England, American and on Continent to raise funds for *Visva – Bharti*; American reception disappointing.
- 1922- Initiates *Sriniketan*, rural reconstruction center, with Leonard Elmhirst as Director; resumes friendship with Rothenstein; lectures in Ceylon.

- 1930- Begins painting as hobby and pursues it with increasing seriousness; goes to Oxford to deliver Hibbert Lectures, postponed from 1928, Published as *The Religion of Man* (1931); has exhibitions of paintings in Germany and England; visits Russia and the Continent (September.) leaves October. 3 for the United.States.
- 1931- Returns to India via England; *The Golden Book of Tagore* compiled as birthday tribute.
- 1938- Publishes *Prāntik* (The Borderland).
- 1940- On August 7, honorary Oxford degree Doctor of Letters in *Absentia*; publishes *Rogasajyāy* (From the Sickbed) and *Ārogya*.
- 1941- Publishes *Janmadine* (On the Birthday); death on August 7, at Jorasanko, Calcutta.

Chapter -4



In the *Kama Sutra* of *Vatsyayana* and ancient books like *ShukraNiti*, etc., sixty-four types of arts or *Kala* have been described. In spite of the difference given to this word the point of view of all has been the same. In some *Jaina* books seventy types of arts have been described. A book '*Kala Vilas*' has been written by a Kashmiri Pandit Kshemendra in which numerous arts have been amply discussed. Only sixty-four arts are there to help a man to get *Dharma* (religion), *Artha* (money), *Kama* (worldly pleasure) and *Moksha* (salvation). There are sixty-four styles as to how a goldsmith steals gold. There are sixty-four ways for a prostitute to earn money. Sixty ways of how to deceive people by writing only, are given and so many other arts have also been discussed. Bearing in the mind the above arts it becomes clear that any work with craftsmanship is Art. Both the arts namely 'Fine' and 'Useful' come under it.

In Europe *Kala* is known as Art. The origin of this word 'Art' is derived from a Latin word Arts or Artem. These words have been an origin from the root Art, which means to create, to produce or to fit. According to Shri Bhola Nath Tiwari, "The use of mental and physical craftsmanship in some artificial creation is Art." Here are three things in this statement the First is that, artificial creation is art.' The Potter (artist) converts earth into an artificial form. He creates different shapes out of wet earth. This creation of form is artificial. The Second thing is that in Art action is important, whereas in science, Knowledge is important. To convert a natural thing into an artificial form is action. Thirdly, art is only that in which craftsmanship is used. If any thing has been made without craftsmanship or dexterity and looks ugly or unattractive, Art is not there. Up till 13th century art was known as craftsmanship, but by 17th centuries the word art began to be used for Music, Sculpture, Painting, Dance, Poetry and Oratory etc.³

³ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing House, Meerut. 1980, pp.1-3.

Rabindranath Tagore says it is not an important question as it stands for art. Like life itself, has grown by its own impulse, and man has taken its pleasure in it without definitely knowing what it is. And we could safely leave it there in the subsoil of consciousness, where things that are of life are nourished in the dark. The question has been asked, "What is Art"? And various persons have given answers. Such discussion introduces elements of conscious purpose into the region where both our faculties of creation and enjoyment have been spontaneous and half conscious.

A fight has been going on for a long time round the saying, "Art for Art's sake," which seems to have fallen into disrepute among a section of Western critics. It is a sign of recurrence of the ascetic ideal of the Puritanic age when enjoyment as an end in itself was held to be sinful. But all Puritanism is a reaction. It does not represent truth in its normal aspect. When enjoyment loses its direct touch with life, growing fastidious and fantastic in its world of elaborate conventions, then comes the call for renunciation, which rejects happiness itself as a snare.⁴ Art deals with the ideal values that man creates with the help of his faculty of imagination. Art, According to Tagore, belongs to that realm of freedom where the needs of life are relegated to the minimum significance, and the ideals elevating the inner being are delineated as the basic truth of existence. In a word, "art", says Tagore, "is the expression of the universal through the individual". It is an attempt to "rescue truth from the dungeon of propriety" and form. Art has invariably a universal appeal because it is not primarily related to men's temporal and spatial material needs, but to their deeper emotional or spiritual bonds.

Tagore discerns in the old *Sanskrit* text the confirmation of his theory that art is the result of surplus of emotional experience, moral judgments or intellectual purposes. Man is capable of transcending himself and his

⁴ Prithwish Neogy: *Rabindranath Tagore on Art and Aesthetics A Selection of Lectures, Essays and Letters*, International cultural Center by Orient Longmans, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and New Delhi, 1961, pp.12-14.

surroundings, and this he embodies in his work of art. Tagore holds that every artist is wedded to a vision, the exploration and communication of which is his primary concern. Tagore thinks that to have the artistic vision, the artist ought to be gifted with a keen sensitiveness, which overwhelms his mind with the awareness of the natural and human world around him. Tagore says: "*The love, the contemplation, the vision that alone can satisfy this hunger finds its place in literature, in Art*".

Art is not primarily concerned with matters of practical utility. It is different from practical life in that while the former neglects the so-called useful things of the world, the latter attaches immense importance to them. Art strives vigorously to free human beings from the bondage of useful things, but fails in it because these things remain with man and he cannot dispense without. Every age is marked by temporary external happenings and situations which obsess the people of that age, but these short-lived excitements do not find permanent place in art, as they are transient.

The subject of art in his famous article, "Literature and social Reality", "*I hold that a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view. Art is not necessarily for art's sake. Purposeless art and literature which much in vogue does not appear to me a served judgment*".

This intention of the artist and its accomplishment can transform even historical events into great, universal truths-fit subject for great works of art. Tagore observes: Through the effect on creation, it not only finds but also communicates the principle of delight in all things.⁵ The art ideal of a people may take fixed root in a narrow soil of tradition, developing a vegetable character, producing a monotonous type of leaves and flowers in a continuous round of repetitions. Because it is not disturbed by a mind, which is held firm

⁵ K.K.Sharma: *Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetic*, Abhinav Publication New Delhi, 1988, pp.6, 12,13,15,16.

by a habit, which piously discourages allurements of all adventure, it is neither helped by the growing life of the people nor does it help to enrich that life.⁶

Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in forms of perfection, which is an end in them. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance, in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not substance or logic, but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to art. Music is the most abstract of all arts, as mathematics is in the region of science. In fact, these two have a deep relationship with each other.⁷

The simple word 'art' is most usually associated with those arts, which distinguish as 'Plastic' or 'Visual', but properly speaking it should include the arts of literature and music. Art is not the expression in Plastic form of any one particular idea in plastic form. It is the expression of any ideal that the artist can realize in plastic Forms.⁸ In the pictorial, plastic and literary arts, the object and our feelings with regard to it are closely associated, like the rose and its perfumes. In music, the feeling distilled in sound becomes itself an independent object. It assumes a tune form which is definite, but a meaning which is, undefinable, and yet which grips our mind with a sense of absolute truth.⁹

The activity of art is based on the fact that a man receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feelings, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. To take the simplest example one man laughs and another, who hears, becomes merry, or a man weeps and another, who hears feels sorrow. A man is excited or irritated, and another man, seeing him, is brought to a similar state of mind. By his movements or by the sounds of his voice a man expresses courage and

⁶P. Neogy: *Rabindranath Tagore On Art And Aesthetic*, Reprinted from Art & Tradition, New Delhi, 196, p. 9.

⁷ Herbert Read: *The Meaning of Art*, Publication. Rupa & Co, 1992, pp.17, 23.

⁸ I bid. P. 587, (*English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore*, 1996).

⁹ K.K. Sharma. *Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetics*, Abhinav Publication, N.D., 1988. p.51

determination or sadness and calmness, and this state of mind passes on to others. And it is on this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feelings and to experience those feelings him self, so that the activity of art is based. And it is also art if a man feels or imagines to himself feelings of delight, gladness, sorrow, despair, courage, or despondency and the transition from one to another of these feelings, and expresses them by sounds so that the hearers are infected by them and experience them as they were experienced by the composer. "Art is a human activity", and consequently, does not exist for its own sake, but is valuable or objectionable in proportion to the benefit or the harm it brings to mankind.¹⁰ Art is the vehicle of the abiding values that civilization creates and nurtures in different countries and epochs. Art is the expression and communication of man's deepest instincts and emotions reconciled and integrated with his social experience and cultural heritage. Every mature work of art expresses not only the values and life-goals of a particular people but also the artist's unique vision.¹¹ The general impression is that art is not for the common man. It is considered too elitist to interest him. It is and it is not. It is, because art today doesn't touch him at all because it looks so distant. It is not because art is terribly important for him, as important as food, water, air and sex. Art, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Art was man's first language. Line came to him before words and used them for expressing his own emotions, feelings and ideas and for communication with those around him, so art is as old as man.¹²

Art is not a gorgeous sepulcher, immovable brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustment with surprise, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future which is as different from the past as the tree from the seed. Art presents the inexhaustible magnificence of our creative spirit. It is

¹⁰ Aylmer Maude: *Tolstoy on Art*, Publication. Melbourne Cape Twon, Bombay, Calcutta, 1924, pp.171-172,366.

¹¹ Radha Kamal Mukerjee: *The Social Function of Art*, Philosphyical Library New York, 1954, p. 1.

¹² S.K.Rama Chandra Roa: *Chitrakala*, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, Kumaro Krupa Road, Bangalore, 20 Agust, 202, p. 23.

generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal; it is unique in its manner and universal in its appeal. It is hospital to All because it has wealth which is its own; its vision is new though its view may be old; it carries its special criterion of excellence within itself and therefore contemptuously refuses to be brow beaten into conformity with a rhetoric manufactured by the subtle mysteries of creation, who want to simplify through their academic code of law that which is absolutely simple through its spontaneity.¹³

To conclude art, according to Tagore, 'in these large tracts of nebulousness Art is creating its stars, stars that are definite the their forms but infinite in their personality. Art is calling us the "children of the immortal", and proclaiming our right to us dwell in the heavenly worlds. Art, is inseparable from man's profound belief in the deep unity and harmony that exist between him and the world around him, the embodiment of witch is manifest in the personality of the artist. So we can say that all scholars agree on the point that art is an expression. We see the limitation of the same in the form of sculpture and painting. The outer expression can be called art by practical point of view and the internal expression by real or philosophical vision, but both are art. The ideas, which arise out of the impression, are expressed. Ideas arise by seeing the outer world and consecration. This expression of one's impressions is art.

Definition & Classification of Art:

In the junior Encyclopedia of Oxford it is written that, "Though art is a perpetual human action, even then it is the most difficult thing in the world to define it. "According to Rabindranath Tagore, "Man expresses himself through art." Art is more of an expression of the inner feeling than of external experiences. He tried to emphasize that the purpose of Art is a living creation of truth and beauty for the pleasure of man.¹⁴

¹³ Reprinted from Art & Tradition, P.Neogy: *Rabindranath Tagore on Art and Aesthetics*, New Delhi, 1961, p.9.

¹⁴ Ibid. p.3. (*A Brief History Of Indian Paintings*, 2002).

Tagore is opposed to the very idea of defining art because “definition of a thing which has a life growth is really limiting one’s own vision in order to be able to see clearly. And clearness is not necessarily the only, or the most important, aspect of a truth.” He explains it by saying that a bull’s eye lantern view is fairly clear, but not complete. Again, he says that to know a wheel in motion, it is not necessary to count its spokes; when velocity of motion, and not accuracy of shape, is important, an inaccurate definition of the wheel does not matter much. Art is inseparable from life alive, from living things, which have such a close and deep relationships with their surroundings as they are sometimes invisible and go unmarked. All this restrains Tagore from defining art, and in defence of his view, he further argues as follows:

In our Zeal for definition we may lop off branches and roots of a tree to turn it into a log, which is easier to roll about from classroom, and, therefore, suitable for a textbook. But because it allows a nakedly clear view of a tree as a whole.

However, Tagore defines art as “the response of man’s creative soul to the Real”, though such a response may be biologically superfluous. This definition of art he gives at two places: in the lecture entitled “The Artist” contained in the book, *The Religion of Man*; and in the article, “*Art and tradition*”, included by Sisir Kumar Ghose in the volume, *Angel of Surplus*, edited by him.¹⁵ Some other scholars say, Tagore did not define art because ‘definition of a thing which has a life growth is really limiting one’s own vision in order to be able to see clearly’ and ‘clearness is not necessarily the only or the most important, aspect of a truth’. For him this life growth is anthropomorphic in character, owing its genesis to the personal existence of man, as opposed to his gross physical existence. ‘This personal man’, Tagore

¹⁵ K.K.Sharma: *Rabindranath Tagore’s Aesthetics*, Abhinav Publications N.D., 1988, p.2.

says, is found in the region where we are free from all necessity, ----- above the needs, both of body and mind, --- above the expedient and useful...¹⁶

Scholars also say, he avoids defining art: but he gives a serious consideration to the cause of its existence. He asserts that art, like life, is born of its own impulse, and man has sought immense joy in it without knowing it precisely. Creative genius, that is, creative power, working within the artist subtly and skillfully, constitutes the fountain-head of art. It is neither the artist's gift of feeling alone, nor his command of expression, nor his possession of both that can make him a really great artist, if he is not endowed with creative genius.

Tagore holds that art is inalienable from the life of purpose, that is, 'the life of the moral world'. That man is different from animal because while the latter is concerned with what is and what is desired, and what should be desired'. Man is the noblest of all creatures because he also leads a life, which is far beyond the life of animals and other species of life. He cultivates in his personality, a character that transports him from the life of desire to 'the life of purpose', "the life of the moral world". While the animal life is inseparable from the altruism of parenthood which is essential for the preservation of the race, man is much more than this: he has a lot of goodness which is not only necessary for his existence, but also enables him to have an excess of it for its own sake, giving birth to his ethics. Man and animal have feelings of pleasure, displeasure, love, anger, and fear, etc; but while the animal have these feelings only to the limit of bare necessity and usefulness, man has them beyond his necessities, and there lies the real origin of art. To quote Tagore's own words:

*Man has a fund of emotional energy, which is not all occupied, with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of Art, for mans civilization is built upon his surplus.*¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 61. (*Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today*, Bhudev Chaudhauri K.G.Subramanayam)

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.3-5. (*Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetic*)

Rabindranath Tagore approached art as signifying a human continuum and having a lively and qua conscious character because of its inseparable relationship with human consciousness. This relational aspect of art can be said to be follow up of Tagore's conception of the world as a 'life world' a world of expressions--and not as an aggregate of things. The world, for Tagore, is a perspective where consciousness releases itself from itself--enclosed ness.

The concept of 'art' is an open concept as distinguished from the closed concepts of logic, mathematics and geometry. Hence it is impossible to identify some of art's necessary properties. New forms of art may emerge. The conditions of the application of the concept of art are also changeable. From this stand point the task of a philosophy of art is not to specify the essence of art but to elucidate the criteria for the correct use of concepts like 'art' expression', 'Form'etc.

Infect the plurality of art, its open -texture character, on the ground of which the concept of art is declared to be an open one, owes to the human agency in the creation and appreciation of arts. One of the major contributions of Rabindranath Tagore to contemporary philosophy of art is to bring about and establish this co-implication. Tagore identifies the elements of the growth, development, expensiveness and self-expression as the necessary constitution of human personality.¹⁸ The world as an art is the play of the supreme person reveling in image making. They never reveal the eternal secret of appearance. If one effort to capture life as expressed in living tissue, one finds carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of itself. One calls it *Maya* and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great, artist, the *Maya* in, is not hurt. For art is *Maya*, it has no other explanation but that it seems to be what it is. It never tries

¹⁸ Bhudev Chaudhari K.G. Subaramanyan: *Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Indian Institute of Advance Study, 1988, pp. 31-32.

to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks, even its own definition and plays the game of hide and seek through its constant flight in change.¹⁹

Rabindranath Tagore believed in a moral ethos intimately related to the total personality of the artist, which was express in art. Rabindranath Tagore defined art as (a) response of man's creative soul to the call of the real.²⁰ Art is basically the art of existence, which invokes the need for a realization of this freedom. A work of art is trans-factual. It takes place in the ordinary world, uses the media of commoners, but surpasses them all by virtue of its beauty unrecorded in any of its specificities in isolation from the whole. This beauty shines forth at the point of unity: A rose has some petals, a stem, which are of some definite shapes and size, and green leaves encircle it. With all these details there exists a principle of unity that transcends such details. We call it beauty. He also believes in a complementarity between truth and beauty. But he assigns a prior significance to truth. For him, truth is lived through a conscious adaptation to the personal self which is transcendent of factual determinations and existential in its free becoming. This stance is a matter of joy, delight, and therefore, beauty. What is delicate or fine is not necessarily beautiful, because it is not necessarily true. He says, "There is pain at each and every creative move of our self. But if we say that it is pain alone, then its description remains incomplete, because it is in this pain that there is beauty, there is delight." Tagor quoted the famous saying of Keats, 'Beauty is truth and truth beauty', more than once, but by reversing the order: 'Truth is beauty, beauty truth'. This change is important, inasmuch as Tagor understands the complementary relation between truth and beauty in view of a pre- identification of truth as beauty.

...When I turned to painting, I at once found myself in the grand cavalcade of the visual world. Trees and plants, men and beasts, everything

¹⁹ Kumar Das Sisir Edit: *The English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore*, Sahitya Akademi, 1996, Vol.3, p. 581.

²⁰ Dr. Nandi Sudhir: *Art and Aesthetic of Abanindranath Tagore*, Rabindra Bharti University, 1983, pp.13, 20.

became vividly real in their own distinct forms. Then lines and colours began revealing to me the spirit of the concrete objects in nature. There was no more need for further elucidation of their *raison de'être* once the artist discovered his role of a beholder ---pure and simple. Only the true artist can comprehend the secret of the visible world and the joy of revealing it...The artist has a call and must answer the challenge to camped the unperceptive majority to share in his joy of the visible, concrete world-directly perceived.

In another way we can see rivers, mountains, oceans, sun, moon, sky etc., all that is the creation or creative power of God. It's limited or short form, for example, is a painting in which we see a scene of sunset at sea. The moment we see it, we exclaim with joy, what a beautiful scene etc. This is the painting, which is the short or limited form of the creative power of God. This gives us knowledge or perception. To create this short form is art.²¹

From above the definition we come to the conclusion that takes us to one and the same direction. Styles may differ but all emphasize upon the Expression. Craftsmanship is attached to the expression. There can be no expression without craftsmanship. According to **Bhola Nath Tiwari**, "*Art in its extensive form is an experiment of man's power of action with a craftsmanship to create a thing, which is mental or physical, useful or recreational or both.*" It gives an idea of the extensiveness of the field of art in which there can be innumerable forms and variety, as singing, playing on instruments, theft etc. But generally the word art is used for fine arts, which can be called its narrow form.

Classification of Art:

There are controversies over the classification of art. Some take it to be indivisible, among which Croche is foremost but some divided it into two

²¹ Ibid .pp. 62-64, 71 (*Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of Today* Bhudev Chaudhuri K.G.Subramanayam)

categories as,

1. Fine or Karu or Charu.

2. Useful.

Fine art is that in which the hand, the head, and the heart of man work together. Fine art must always be produced by the subtlest of all machines, which is the human hand.²² Useful art. Fine art, from the very fact that they belong in the generative nature, participate in the law of useful arts.²³ Monier Williams has divided art into two in his *Sanskrit Kosha* in accordance with the Indian point of view.

1. External or Practical Art

2. Secret Art

Painting, architecture, Carpentry, goldsmithy etc., come under natural Art and embracing, kissing etc., come under secret art. Indian scholars have never divided art; they have only counted the different forms of the same, because they thought the realistic division of the same as impossible. Monier Williams mistook Indian point of view that art is infinite and every big and small actions of daily life come within the definition of art. So he gave the word secret art to embracing and Kissing etc., taking them to be the secret action of life.

In Europe Plato was the first man to classification art. By calling poetry as an art and art as an imitation of nature he types art. After him his disciple Aristotle pointed out towards the useful and fine arts. Architecture was not known as fine art in the past days as we take it today. After Aristotle, in middle age, art was further divided. From the point of view of Education it was divided into two categories

²² Ruskin John: *The Two Paths being Lectures on Art*, London: George Allen & Sons 44 & 45 Rath Bone Place, 1913, p.57.

²³ Maritain Jacques: *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1955, p.63.

1. Professional Art and Liberal Art:

Dying, Printing, Carpentry, masonry, goldsmith etc., came under professional art. Under liberal art came literature, music, grammar, argument, oratory etc. In the fields of education under the class, Fellow of arts (F.A.), (B.A.) Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts (M.A) etc. Words were invented which came under the Faculty of Art. Taking into account the normal division of art like Fine and Useful, it was further divided on different principles, as follows, *Visual Arts* (a) Based on form and place (b) Based on motion and rhythm, Sculpture, Painting and Architecture come under the Art based on form and place. There are visual arts, which can be seen. But arts based on motion and rhythm cannot be seen. Music and poetry come under this category. Music gives pleasure through its sound. Poetry gives pleasure when its words are read or recited with music.

2. Based on eye and ear:

(a) That gives pleasure to eyes, (b) That gives pleasure to ear, (c) That gives pleasure to both eye and ear. Under (a) come painting, Sculpture etc. That gives pleasure to eyes. Fine arts like music and poetry come under (b) which give pleasure to ear. But dramas and Dance come under (c) which give pleasure to both

3. Based a Shape:

(a) Solid art and (b) Formless art. Sculpture and Painting etc. come under (a) and Poetry and Music under (b) as they do not have any solid form. Though poetry is written but listening to it derives the real pleasure, thus its solid form is not visible.

4. Based on imitation: (a) Based on imitation, (b) Not based on imitation.

First of all painting comes under imitation, because whatever the painter sees he expresses it through the imitation of the same. But in modern art paintings are done without imitation, which is known as abstract art. But even

in that the expression of ones mental impression is there, though of course, the aspect of imitation is different. Sculpture is also based on imitation. Architecture is an art, which does not need imitation.

5. Based on Psychology: (a) Decorative, (b) Imitative, (c) Self-expressive.

The art of make up comes under (a) Different types of make up like Patra Rachna etc also come under it. Painting and Sculpture come under imitative art. Psychologists say, "To imitate is the human nature." He tries to set himself as he sees around. This inborn quality makes a man create some thing. Self-expressive art is important. Under it a man presents his emotions. Through Poetry, Dance and painting the artist expresses himself.²⁴

According to Tagore expresses his ideas about some important forms of art. As regards music, he rightly holds that it is the purest of art forms. It embodies beauty most compressively, having remarkable oneness and utmost simplicity of form and Spirit with least consideration for anything extraneous. "We seem to feel that the manifestation of the infinite in the finite forms of creation is music itself, silence and visible." Music offers us "the pure essence of expressiveness in existence," since music is made of sound, and sounds, and sound offers no resistance to expressiveness. In the pictorial, plastic and literary arts, the object and our feelings with regard to it are closely associated, like the rose and its perfume. Tagore is of the view that the art of vocal music has its own peculiar features and functions.²⁵

In the same way art has been classification in different forms Scholars have divided art according to their own points of view. Hegal's division is important. He has division art on the basis of development. According to him fine art has got three forms:

1. Symbolic
2. Classical

²⁴ L.C.Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Publishing House, Meerut.2002, pp.4-6

²⁵ K.K. Sharma: *Rabindranath Tagore's Aesthetic*, Abhinav Publication, N.D, 1988, p.51.

3. Impressionistic

Under symbolic art the ideas are not expressed fully because of its being based on symbols. But under classical art ideas are fully expressed because in its scope there is a harmony in ideas and shapes.²⁶

In the end it would not be out of place to mention that art is indivisible. There seems to be a mental gymnastic and no reality in all the classification of art done by different intellectuals. Formerly the classification of art as fine and useful seemed to be proper, but fine art can become useful art. Normally we derived pleasure out of music. But when the singer sings to earn money it becomes useful. In the same way useful art can become fine art when it is not meant to earn money. So we come to the conclusion that the art or *Kala* cannot be divided. Roche has put this thing with a beautiful example. According to him the books can be divided for convenience to place them in a library, which is useful also, but it does not mean the division of knowledge, as knowledge cannot be divided, the same thing applies to art or *Kala* as well.

Contemporary and Modern Art-Western and Indian

Modern Art is closely related to creative pleasure painting since it forms, chronologically, a period of intensive experiment. In its many exploratory aspects it provides a variety of stimulating precedents for the spare time artist who may, while seeking his own personal direction, himself explore the ground already covered by modern painters.²⁷

Actually this modern art is the creation of camera. When in the middle of the 19th century camera was invented, the artists were compelled to think in some new direction. While in painting, it took months to complete a landscape, camera did the same job in a fraction of a second. So in order to earn their

²⁶ Ibid. pp.4-6 (*A Brief History of Indian Painting*)

²⁷ Mervyn Levy: *Painting For All*, Odhams Press Lim. Long Acre, London, 1963, p. 155.

livelihood they started some novel, artistic and creative painting. Two things are especially visible in the painting of that sort. (1) **Reality** (2) **Emotionalism**.

In the words of *Dr. C. L. Jha* the meaning of real art is the sincerity in ascertainment and the truth of reality. The meaning of impressionistic art is the abstract and emotional investigation of the pure and real shape of nature. In the realistic art we see outer world through our soul. But in impressionistic art we see our soul through the outer world. Whatever is painted in the former can be easily seen and understood, but to the latter we have to peep into the hidden idea of the painting or shape. Both the arts are independent.

The modern artist says that he is doing some experiments, in which he feels a divine pleasure by expressing his emotions and ideas freely like a mystic poetry in blank verse. Some artists express their emotions or impressions through colours only. Such paintings do not have any shape but have some patches of colours. According to the artists, every patch of colours carries some idea. As red colour denotes love, chivalry and enthusiasm, yellow denotes happiness and prosperity. In the same way every colour has its own importance. Such type of art is known as Abstract. In the same way, the artist expresses his ideas like fear, pleasure, love, sorrow, hate, affection etc in form of a painting according to his own free will without caring for the onlookers. This was called expression.²⁸

Beginning of Modern art in Western:

The Modern Movement in art is a rebirth of the creative spirit in man. It involves a violent break with the skilled naturalism inherited from the nineteenth century and an adventurous espousal of the age-old elements of creation, symbolism, and design.²⁹ Various dates are used to mark the point at

²⁸ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing House, Meerut 2002, pp. 156-157.

²⁹ Pearson: *The Modern Renaissance in American Art*, Publisher Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954, p.24.

which modern art began.³⁰ It is generally accepted that modern Western art dates from 1863. The occasion of salon des Refuses in Paris, where Edouard Manet first exhibited showed his *Dejeuner Sur l'herbe* to a shocked public.³¹ But other and even earlier dates may be considered; 1855, the year of the exposition, in Courbet built a separate pavilion to exhibit the painter's studio. 1824, when the English landscapists John Constable and Richard Parkes Banington exhibited there brilliant, direct color studies from nature at the Paris Salon. Each of these dates has significance for the development of modern art.³²

Now that the modern movement is largely a matter of art history, the extent of the achievements- and the failures too- that have been wrought by this enormously virile, often violent period of intensive searching. The modern movement has been securely set in France. All the great innovations and advances in painting from the "new realism" of Manet to the colours experiments of the favor, originated in that country. It is true that certain of the masters who contributed to the main stream of evolution were not in themselves Frenchmen (Vangogh and Picasso), yet the actual flash point of creation was France, and usually Paris where, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, artists could meet in the most stimulating and fertile surroundings, the Convivial cafes, there to discuss and hammer out in the cut and thrust of reach's others living company, the radical, often inflammatory ideas that were to bring about such momentous and for reaching changes in the whole structure of Europe can painting and sculpture . Picasso was perhaps the first outrageously modern artist of the twentieth century, and although there are few today who could find anything to quarrel with in Manet- himself one of the most maligned artists of the nineteenth century. The first authentic painter of the modern era was Edouard Manet. He extended a jaded, worn-out idiom,

³⁰ Thames and Hudson: *A History of Modern Art, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, Third Edition Arnasn H.H. Publication, 1969, p. 13.

³¹ Balraj Khanna Aziz Kurtha: *Art of Modern India*, Publication, Thames and Hudson, London, 1998, p. 20.

³² Ibid. p. 13. (*A History of Modern Art, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture Photography*).

into afresh, virile direction. Yet he was to effect no revolutionary changes in technique, or style, in this sense he was a traditionalist himself, and almost certainly the last great exponent of the formal three-dimensional method which extended from the Renaissance through such masters as Titian, Velasquez, Rubens, Hals, Rembrandt and Goya. But the contribution he was to make, the new direction he was to impart to this great, but failing tradition, was to throw him at once into the full glare of bitter controversy, into the blazing spotlight of ridicule and vilification.

Few great innovators in the history of painting have had to endure the virulence of such abuse as was heaped upon his "Luncheon on the Grass" when it was first exhibited at the Salon des Refuses (an exhibition of work rejected by the official French Salon: the equivalent of our Royal Academy) in 1863, and upon his "Olympia" when it was first shown at the Salon in 1865. On the face of things, this must seem more than a little surprising, since both these masterpieces are based on traditional models. "Luncheon on the Grass" was suggested to Manet by Giorgione's "Concert", in the Louver, and there are many prototypes of the "Olympia" composition, outstanding among which count Titian's "Venus" and Goya's "Maja Desnuda".

Truth was the foundation stone of the modern movement in painting very soon, the impressionists also were to seek truth. with Manet's new realism the ball started to roll again, the stream of painting was freed from its stagnation among the rocks and boulders of nineteenth century hypocrisy, and a revolution that was to sweep away every vestige of the past had begun³³. The modern movement carries on the Grand Tradition of creative art into Modern Classicism.³⁴ So different types of painting were done which were called by different names like Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism.

³³ Ibid. pp. 155,165, 67,169. (*Painting fore All*)

³⁴ Pearson: *The Modern Renaissance In American Art*, Publisher Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954, p. 24.

The Beginning of Modern Art in India:

The development of contemporary or modern art in India has been intimately linked with the development of modern art in Europe. Although its evolution in India has been unlike that in the West.³⁵

Indian painting, evolved into a breathtaking genre with the arrival in India of the Mughal in the sixteenth century. Sweeping down from Central Asia, these descendants of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan brought with them Persian court artists and Sophisticated refinement considered the finest of the times. Under the broad-minded patronage of the early Mughal emperors, a remarkable synthesis took place between their imported tastes and the indigenous Indian sensibility. This spread to other princely courts and resulted in what are known today as *Mughal*, *Rajput* miniature painting, which are generally regarded as being among the most beautiful images ever created. Their makers kept alive the flame of creativity in India for as long as they had patronage.

But came a long and a crippling hiatus, which began when the British assumed control of India in the eighteenth century and lasted for two hundred years. Like the Mughal before them, the British brought their own tastes, but the new rulers had no interests in any form of cultural synthesis, nor could they perceive the genius of the Indian people.³⁶ The influence spread with increasing British political power in India following the setting up of the British East India Company in 1600, and more particularly when schools of art were established in the metropolitan cities of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay.³⁷ In them school only the Western art was taught. The result was that the knowledge of traditional art vanished and the new technique, which was ugly, could not get appreciation of the people and the students who went out after receiving the complete training, had to do some other jobs instead of painting to earn there

³⁵ Pran Nath Mego: *Contemporary Art In India A Perspective*, National Book Trust India, 2001, p.19.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 7. (*Art of Modern India*)

³⁷ Ibid. p. 19. (*A Brief History of Indian Paintings*)

livelihood. He became difficult to earn through such paintings. In this age of confusion Raja Ravi Verma appeared as a green patch in the desert of the painting in India. He learnt western oil painting from Theodore Jainson who was a European portrait painter. Raja Ravi Verma who was unaware of the traditional Indian painting started painting glimpses of Indian life in oil in western style. He was an inhabitant of Travancore. He used to learn something from every European artist who came there. He painted landscape and portraits both, which were liked by the people. But this style could not become the part of the Indian painting and came to an end after the death of Raja Ravi Verma. The reason was that it was fully European. It had nothing of the Indian style.

Even after long efforts Britishers could not develop the western art of painting in India. By the end of the 19th century and beginning of 20th century this art came to an end with Raja Ravi Verma. But the credit of bringing a new style of painting in India goes to E.B. Havell.³⁸ Havell served the Art College from July 1896 January 1906. Within this period he brought about fundamental changes in the art and the institution.³⁹ Havell who was constantly trying to reveal the depth and significance of Indian art.⁴⁰

There he was introduced to Abanindranath Tagore who was then a leading artist of India. The co-operation of two different gifted men made possible a great change in their public attitude towards art.⁴¹ Within ten years a new school of painting was established with his help and efforts. This was the beginning of Modern Art in India. Rabindranath Tagore also played a great role in modern painting besides Abanindranath & E.B.Havell. Rabindranath Tagore is believed to be the first artist of modern art of India. When he went to Europe he was much impressed by Paul Klee and Picasso etc. He started painting on

³⁸ L.C. Sharma: *A of Brief History Indian Paintings*, Publishing House, Meerut, 1988. pp.147- 148.

³⁹ *Nand Lal Bose A Collection of Essays*, A Centenary Volume, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, Rabindra Bhavan, 1983,p.33.

⁴⁰ Amit Mukhopadhyay: *Fragment Text Art of Bengal*, Ashim Mukherjee, Gajjar Colony Nizampura, Baroder, New Delhi, 1994,p.31.

⁴¹ Munshi Manoharlal: *Art and Swadeshi*, Published Pvt Ltd, 1995.p.116.

their modern technique, which was done without any pre-thinking on exercise.⁴²

Rabindranath Tagore, who started painting late in life influenced by “Primitive and Africa art”, was more of a poet and literate than artist. He was charged by a desire to establish an individual style and delicate culture, and revive the forgotten school of India painting. While his early art was western in technique, his natural imagination and feeling for line and rhythm revealed the intensely eastern character of his art.⁴³

Rabindranath Tagore-the painter, similarly, was not a modern painter, simply for reason that his paintings display strong surface resemblances with the works of north European expressionist artists. Rabindranath’s modernity lay primarily in his personalised mode of expression of his subjectivity, without the slightest hint of subjecting himself to any institutionalised form. Secondly, what is more important, his subjectivity subsumed, or was a response, to, his apprehension of the here-and now reality. Insofar as this last mentioned criterion is recognized as an important criterion of judgment of Indian modernity. Rabindranath was the earliest of the true modern artists of India. His paintings, for the first time, was encountered an anguished individual’s anxiousness to cope with the complexities of existence. Although Rabindranath stood against all kinds of ritual and awe-struck obeisance to institutions sanctified by convention or power and although he would himself like to chart his own course of his subjective expression in art, he was not unresponsive to individual quest to find the relevant and significant in one’s own tradition, for position one’s own identity in time and space.⁴⁴ These early works were doodles and erasure of unwanted words or whole lines covered with scribbling of pen resembling grotesque creatures. Indeed, at that time they were seen as

⁴² Ibid.p.156. (*A of Brief History Indian Paintings*) 1988

⁴³ <http://www.newindpress.com/Sunday/collItems.asp2ID=SEC20030926093630>

⁴⁴ S.K. Rama Chandra: *Chitrakala*, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, Kumaro Krupa Road, Bangalore, 20 Agust, 202, p.58.

scribbling and not as art. The art scene in the 19s was dominated by the traditionalism of the Bengal school and the academism of art school trained artists. Perhaps intellectuals of the period were ignorant about modern art and this may be a reason for his art to be misunderstood. The narrow nationalist ideology of Abanindranath and his followers perturbed Rabindranath, and he had long ago rejected academic realism as a progressive art form. Thus in 1922 he organized a show of German expressionists in Calcutta to show modern forms of art to the public. His style was an amalgam of various influences. In one sense Rabindranath represented the modernist impulse in the visual arts. He understood the modern to be a move towards expressive spontaneity, a selective appropriation of other art forms namely primitive and folk and a projection of the self of the artist.⁴⁵

It was true that Rabindranath drew much inspiration from the new art movement in Bengal. It was quite natural for the poet to have a peep at the new movement particularly when it was being heralded by one of the members of his family, Abanindranath Tagore.⁴⁶ His paintings show strong influence of American, Indian and pre-Columbian art, Peruvian animal and bird figures and African dynamism.⁴⁷ Tagore's paintings were much more appreciated in Western countries than in his own. In a particular culture Tagore dedicated all his paintings to the west.⁴⁸ So we can say that the role of contemporary Indian modern painting lies in antiquity. From the ancient cave paintings to the tribal paintings, from Miniatures to *Madhubani*, from Raja Ravi Verma to Rabindranath Tagore the rich heritage of Indian paintings has cast its powerful impression on the mind and art of modern contemporary Indian artist. Indian paintings breathed a whole new life in the 19th and 20th century and the main propend of this renaissance was Raja Ravi Verma. Another important whose were the setting up Government Art College in Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and

⁴⁵ <http://www.chennaionline.com/artscene/history/rabindranath.asp>

⁴⁶ Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya: *Tagore's Vision of A Global Family*, Enkay Publisher Pvt Ltd. New Delhi, 1982, p.64.

⁴⁷ <http://www.newindpress.com/Sunday/collItems.asp2ID=SEC20030926093630>

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.64. *Tagore's Vision of A Global Family*.

Lahore. The Bengal school originated with the works of Abanindranath Tagore, Nand Lal Bose, A.K.Haldar and many more. In the South there were pioneers such as K.C.S. Panickar, K.Madhavan Menon and others whose rich colours and simplicity of designs set a propensity that was to be followed by future artist. After that Indian painting has definite effect of European modern art.⁴⁹

Today modern Indian contemporary painting is like an interconnected flow of various styles and movements: inspired from the western academic customs of Raja Ravi Verma to Tagore's imagery, to that of Ramkinkers Baij, reflecting the forms of nature from the art of Amrita Sher-Gil and FN Souza that was inspired by European modernism to that KCS Panikaer that seeks a deeper link with traditional crafts and philosophy: from the socially responsible art of Somnath Hare, Sudhir Pal, who differently reveal the universality of folk tribal-Urban gaunt contemporary Indian modern painting reflected in the works of Jogen Choudhury, SatishGujral, M.F.Hussain, Krishen Khanna, Ganesh Pyne, GM.Sheikh, and others.

⁴⁹ <http://www.craftsinindia.com/art-and-crafts/contemporary-indian-modern-painting.html>

Chapter -2



Chapter II

Historical Development and Movement of Bengal School

Bengal School had a larger role to play in the world of art, for it was here that “modern” Indian art was nurtured and found direction. Bengal School was very important for several reasons. Bengal is historically important and was one of the first seats of British power. The East India Company established a trading post at Calcutta, which afterwards became a great commercial city. Calcutta was at the same time growing to be the cultural center of Bengal, superseding earlier ancient towns.¹

The paintings of the Bengal school, far from dealt with contemporary problems or the emotion of the times are withdrawn and other-worldly. The tendency towards idealising is the only link with the heritage of ancient traditional art.² Because the ninth to the thirteenth century sculptures and paintings are by no means the earliest objects of art from Bengal. Besides the pre-historic and the proto-historic terracotta found from various sites of West Bengal, a large number of terracotta toys, dolls, small votive figures, small ritual figurines, seals with designs, and images have been found from Chandra Ketugarh in North 24-Parganas and Tamluk in Midnapur and other places of deltaic West Bengal. Bengal art came to a turning point. Recent discovery of some fragmentary evidence of the fifteen century illustrated manuscripts from Husain Shahi Bengal, the glorious period of development of Bengali literature and music, had dispelled the notion that the *Sultanate* period of Bengal was totally bereft of visual arts. Stylistically these paintings bear family

¹ Jaya Appasamy: *Abanindranath Tagore and The Art of His Times*, Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi, 1968, p.1.

² Jaya Appasamy: *25 Years of Indian Art Painting Sculpture & Graphics in the Post Independence Era*: Lalit Kala Akademi Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi, 1972. p.7.

resemblance with the contemporary Sultanate paintings, especially of the Chaurapanchasika variety from Jaunpur. Although there is no historical evidence to prove it, one may not be wholly wrong in assuming that the distinctiveness of Bengal art enjoys has stemmed from continuous, though not unchanging, traditions of folk arts and crafts.

The situation, changed drastically after 1765, when the British East India Company took over the revenue management of Subah Bangla (the present day West Bengal, Bangladesh, Bihar and Orissa) and especially after 1793, when by the enactment of permanent settlement, the Company's government changed the system of land revenue administration so completely that the whole gamut of land centered human relations in rural areas changed. These changes were compounded by wilful suppression of Indian crafts and manufactures to turn India into an importer of machine-made goods from Britain after 1813.

All these factors disrupted the continuity of the more professional rural crafts and arts. But it was the Calcutta-ward migration of urban artists from the disbanded courtly ateliers of northern India that was bringing about decisive changes in the Indian art scene. Towards the fourth quarter of the 18th century, in the court of the puppet Nawab of Murshidabad, the East India Company's rule had firmly entrenched in Bengal and the hub of activities had shifted to Calcutta. Peripatetic European painters had already started coming into India in search of fortune. European prints (engravings, etchings etc.) had started coming into India even before that. An art school was established in Calcutta in 1854, with the blessing of the colonial government, resulting in making pre-art school artists redundant. The most significant body of drawings and paintings of nineteenth century Bengal, are the *Kalighat* pats, created by a close knit group of clay modelers and painters from rural areas who settled down in the vicinity of the Kali temple of *Kalighat* locality in the Calcutta, in search of employment. Although the stylistic ancestry of *Kalighat* Pats can be traced back to the rural pats of Bengal, the differences between them make *Kalighat*

pats more significant as works of art.³ Here was a rich prize for such conquistadors as Robert Clive, and a secure base from which successive governors general could extend the sway and trading sphere of the East India Company.⁴ From the time of Warren Hastings it was the capital of the British possessions in India and a prosperous city, with advanced educational facilities and organised publishing princes had their own houses there, among them the aristocratic houses of the Tagores.⁵

All through the nineteenth century, Bengal's bicultural intellectuals were setting the tone for the new outlook on religion, politics, and literature being adopted by English-knowing Indians in other parts of the subcontinent. First the writings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Debendranath Tagore, then the personal visits and lectures of Keshub Chunder Sen and Vivekananda, brought modern interpretations of Hinduism to Madras, Bombay, Hindustan, and the Punjab. In the political sphere it was a sign of Bengal's preeminence that the first move to organize the Indian National Congress took the form of a circular letter in 1883 to all the graduates of the University of Calcutta. Even in literature, the innovations and experiments of Bengali writers were beginning to influence the vocabulary and style of writers in other north Indian languages. Bengal provided an exceptionally fertile soil for this movement to religious reformation.⁶ Bengal School, while it originated in Bengal with the work of Abanindranath Tagore, nevertheless soon became national. The students of Abanindranath himself were mostly Bengali, but in the second generation the activity of his followers spread over the country and their students (third generation) were from many parts of India. India's art tradition, which at various periods of her history had reached great heights, fully expressing her

³ S.K. Ramachandra Rao: *Chitrakala*, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, Kumaro Krupa Road, Bangalore, 20 August 2002, pp. 53-54.

⁴ Stephen N. Hay, *Asian Ideas of East and West, Tagore & His Critics in Japan, China India*, Cambridge, Harward Unwin Press, 1970, p. 250.

⁵ Jaya Appasamy: *Abanindranath Tagore and The Art of His Times*, Lalit Kala Akademy, New Delhi, 1968, p.1.

⁶ Ibid. pp. 251, 50.

national culture, seemed, in the 19th century to have come to a natural close. Remnants of paintings survived precariously in some of the small kingdoms. After the British conquest there was no serious art that could attract or inspire an all-Indian audience. The Bengal school therefore represents the first important art trend of modern times after a comparatively a dark age.⁷

The 19th century in India was an era of immense change. Every phase of life was affected by the shifts in political power, economy and social values. A vast, war-torn, rigidly traditional country was shaken by new forces, and especially by the impact of western civilization.⁸ The term Renaissance is often used to describe the cultural efflorescence that took place in 19th and early 20th century Bengal. Actually, its use here is misleading for a renaissance means rebirth. What occurred in Bengal was not a rebirth but a gradual development in many areas making Bengal the first of the Indian provinces to possess a rich and modern milieu, with the necessary vitality to explore and create new achievements in several parallel fields. A significant point about these cultural movements is their evolution from within Indian society.⁹ The 19th century was also the period of the rediscovery of India's past through scientific studies in archaeology and history. Ancient Indian literature was being translated into English. The works of scholars like Max Mueller, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins and Sir Edwin Arnold considerably added to the prestige of oriental studies. The Western appreciation of the Indian culture, even if limited to only a few scholars, brought to Europe a different picture of India than what the imperialists did. Secondly, it gave the Indian a new self-esteem. Sir William Jones and Colebrook founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784.¹⁰ At the fountainhead of this revivalist celebration was a single aristocratic family of Bengal, called the Tagores. This multi-talented family is credited with

⁷ Jaya Appaswamy: *The Critical Vision*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1985, pp. 26-27.

⁸ Jaya Appasamy: *Abanindranath Tagore and The Art of His Times*, Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi, 1968, p.2.

⁹ R.C. Majumdar: *Glimpses of Bengal in The Nineteenth Century*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 74.

¹⁰ R.M. Panikar: *A Survey of Indian History*, Bombay, and Madras, 1947, p.265.

contributions not only to painting, but also poetry, fiction and playwriting, and even singing, acting and dancing.¹¹

Prominent among the creators of a new Bengal culture was the family of the Tagore's, which through three generations produced many distinguished sons and daughters-Debendranath, the philosopher Dwijendranath, Satayendranath, a scholar and the first Indian in the Indian Civil Service, and Jyotirindranath, musician and artist. Belonging to the next generation were Gagandranath, the musician Dinendranath and the painter Abanindranath. The family house of the Tagores', at 'Joransanko' in Calcutta, was the scene of immense creative activity. New plays and poetry were beings written which were immediately produced, new music composed and new experiment in painting born. Beside the contribution of Abanindranath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore in Bengal School, E.B.Havell also greatly contributed in Bengal School.

E. B. Havell:

Thanks to the sympathetic imaginations of the late E.B. Havell, who was then the head of the Calcutta School of art, India regained her lost heritage and became wide-awake to her past glories and achievements. When Havell saw the futility of transporting South Kensington wholesale into India and making Indian art students tenth- rate copyists of a crude type of western art.¹² Being a real teacher and an ardent art critic, inspite of being a Britisher, he said that the way western art is being introduced here forcefully and the method thereof is wrong, because there can be only a little change in the basic style of an art. Total change is not possible anywhere. He came to the conclusion that the ancient and modern art of India can be given some western touch only after renewal of the same.¹³

¹¹ [http:// www.indianartcircle.com/arteducation/Modernart1.shtml](http://www.indianartcircle.com/arteducation/Modernart1.shtml)

¹² G.Venkata Chalam: *Contemporary Indian Painter*, Nalanda Publication in Bombay, 1962, p.xiv.

¹³ L.C.Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing' House ,Meerut, 1980.p. 148.

The policy, which Havell put into practice was based on three considerations, the first involving the nature and function of the schools of art. Havell agreed. In all schools of art, the bias had so far lain in a western direction, and the results had been deplorable. British art, he considered, gave 'no spiritual impulse and afforded only the poorest mental pabulum, with its mechanical perspective, not related like oriental perspective to the laws of design but only empirically, to the science, of optics; with its anatomy, likewise, unrelated to artistic thought, and its "principles" which even the British failed to put into practice. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that not only had many students failed to obtain employment, but those who had were making only the most object contributions either to British or to Indian art. The most successful artist was Ravi Verma. Havell, however, was less concerned with British deficiencies than with the lack of Indian qualities. Madras, where he had first taught, had never possessed a strong artistic tradition in painting, but it had been particularly well placed for the studying of Indians religion and philosophy. His first step, after joining the Calcutta school of art, was to abolish the British system of teaching. In the ordinary European art academy (he wrote) the student goes through a long, laborious and rather painful process of eyetraining to develop his imitative powers'. True Oriental art practice was based on composition from memory rather than the eye. 'The Oriental artist develops his imitative skill mainly by the exercise of his creative power. Such a break with British methods was only a first step. But much more difficult was to create a system to take its place and to this problem there appeared to be only one answer. Indian artists, in Havell's view, must use traditional themes, express traditional sentiments, & employ traditional styles. They must understand Indian art and more especially, its 'spiritual and ethical purpose'. Havell asserts that 'even under the depressing influences of the nineteenth century, Indian art could still create beautiful things recalling the strength and spiritual fervour of its former days'. Havell's emphases on resurgent of Indian art rather than adopting west.

Havell was truly Indian, and this would form the surest and best foundation on which to build up the revival of Indian painting. Such views were revolutionary in the extreme. Not only were they in sharp conflict with current British practice, they involved a fresh attitude to Indian art. It is hardly surprising, then, that on their introduction Havell's students expressed shocked and dismay. And, infact, writing much later, Havell himself conceded his early difficulties.¹⁴ Infact, there is no artist who can overlook tradition, and most original creative talents seek vitality wherever they can find it in the impulses of history. As the pupils of Havell and Abanindranath, who imbibed the Ajanta tradition themselves, became teachers in the Art Schools of the various provinces of India, they brought up two generations of students blindly to believe in the lifeless, over-sentimentalised and 'spiritual' figures of their paintings, as the models of progress. And as the British contempt for Indian's culture became intenser, this so called 'national' art of India, which was mainly revivalist, pitted itself against Europe as a 'spiritual' art against the 'materialist' naturalism of the west.¹⁵ Instead of turning for help to Havell to what called the "native living traditions of art," the artists of Bengal School derived their main conscious influences from the court-cultures of an almost forgotten past: in particular, from the Ajanta frescoes, Mughal miniatures, and Rajput painting.¹⁶

E.B.Havell brought to Indian aesthetics an artist's knowledge and perception; he also looks to it the domatic impetuosity of a proselyte campaigning with a missionary fervor for the acceptance of the truth as he saw it. This truth satiated to him especially from the pristine excellence of Vedic thought which he claimed to be originating impulse of all the forms and motif, of Indian art in its every historical phase us apotheosis, to Havell, was reached

¹⁴ W.G. Archer, *Indian And Modern*, Ruskin House, George Allen & Unwine Ltd. Museum Streets London, 1959, pp. 29-31.

¹⁵ Mulk Raj Anand: *Introduction to Indian Art*, by Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1956, pp. 108-109.

¹⁶ *Art and Letters Indian and Pakistan*: Journal of The Royal Society for India, Pakistan and Ceylon, London, vol.20, 1946, p.38.

in the millennium of *Gupta* art, in *Ajanta* and *Ellora*, and a little less exquisitely in *Rajput* and *Mughal* painting, and in *Chola* sculpture.¹⁷

Havell, it is true, was faced with the error of many European critics in judging Indian art by the rules and formulae of their own art, by canons of anatomy, perspective and style; he had to create (which he conceived to be his vocation) the dispositions for the understanding of Indian aesthetic. He enunciated Indian art as fundamentally idealistic and transcendental, and set enunciated Indian art as fundamentally idealistic and transcendental, and set himself to expound the precise meaning of symbolism in allegorical presentations, without regarding them as artistic in their own formal right and for their own sake. It was this clouded faith that Havell injected into Abanindranath Tagore, and through him, into the Bengal School, perpetuating a curious fallacy.

Abanindranath Tagore who was then a leading artist of India. Within ten years a new school of painting was established with his efforts. It was based fully on Indian traditions, which came to be known as Bengal School. Some critics, who were conservative in their nature, thought some conspiracy of Havell in the background but soon things were clear and up till now his name is held in a high regard. Some critics also did not believe that the art student can bring some novelty with the same sentiment and tradition after copying the painting of Ajanta etc. In his books, "Indian sculpture and paintings" "Indian Architecture" and "The ideals of Indian Art" Havell attracted the attention of the world towards the great tradition of the art of India and through them condemned the prejudiced and cured criticism of Indian art by Britishers. But Archer, in his book "Indian and Modern art", called these books as full of mistakes, while according to Manohar Kaul all the charges are false, Whatever Havell has said is correct because he was a conscientious writer and teacher with a pure soul. He further gave the proof of his greatness by not following the

¹⁷ Rama Chandra Rao P.R.: *Modern Indian Painting*, Publication Rachna Bhemas Enagardens, Madras-4 Indians 1953, p. 10.

dirty policy of the Britishers. Percy Brown also praised the efforts of E.B. Havell and said that ideas, which the new artist would express by copying old masters in the Indian art, would be developed in the traditional style and the same thing happened. The revolution of which Havell and Shri Abanindranath Tagore took decision, was simply to sow the seeds of Indian tradition afresh among the Indian artists, and they succeeded in this endeavor. After that Lord Curzon, who was very much impressed by the heritage of Indian art and artists. There were 30 Britishers and 5 Indians in this organization and the director was architecture, enacted legislatures for their preservation. In 1907 Havell and Lord Kitchner.¹⁸ Havell took him round for an inspection of the Art Gallery attached to the school. Havell had already had the Gallery cleared of all the rubbish it had accumulated in past years- third rate copies of old Masters from the refuse dump of Europe- replacing them by a few original specimens from the *Mughal*, *Rajput* and other school.¹⁹

All this was very shocking to the “cultured” people of that age.²⁰ It was after this that Havell arranged for an exhibition of Indian Paintings under the auspices of his Institution. An amusing incident occurred in connection with this exhibition. Among the exhibits only a few came from Abanindranath’s studio and one of them caught the eye of Lord Curzon who was a reputed connoisseur of art. Havell would not let his “Collaborate” make a present of it to the Viceroy, but instead, set a price on it, but not quite so for Lord Curzone, it appeared. Rich though he was, Lord Curzon, according to his biographer, always kept a strict eye on his personal budget. So the Viceroy stooped to bargaining but Havell was adamant. Havell did not like any of these pictures to go to a private collection out of India. In the end, Abanindranath offered the entire series to Havell as *gurudakshina*. Havell was overjoyed to receive this attribute to his guru-ship and he had the pictures kept in the Indian Art Gallery

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 148-149 (*A Brief History of Indian Painting*, 2002).

¹⁹ K.R. Kirpalani: *Abanindra Number*, The Visva Bharti Quarterly, Vol. VIII, 1942, p.10.

²⁰ *An Album of Nanda Lal Bose With A Biographical Note*, Santiniketan Asramik Sangha, Calcutta, 1956, p.7.

as permanent exhibits.²¹ Madras, where he had first taught the method and idea of western art, which the Indian mind was so eager to learn. But Havell proved too great a man to encourage wrong values and he soon set himself to draw the attention of the authorities and the Indian public to the work of Indian art and started his movement for the revival of the handloom industry. He set himself to restore the position of the village craft in the art life of this country. With this end in view he tried to remodel the existing art school and opened a new department of handloom. He made it compulsory for the art student to learn stenciling, paper cutting etc...²²

Towards the end of 1908 Havell had to retire from the art school and leave for England on account of his health. Percy Brown succeeded him as the principal. Abanindranath continued as the vice-Principal. So by his contribution in Bengal school, Havell's name will forever shine in the History of aesthetic revival of modern India.

Abanindranath Tagore:

In the last quarter of the 19th Century the modern renaissance of Indian art began. There were a number of more important artists who contributed a lot to this field and gave a new direction to Indian aesthetics. Among those most popular Indian artists, Abanindranath Tagore was one. The revival of Indian art by Abanindranath Tagore is a resuscitation of Indian types in the climate of his soul.²³

According to **Rabindranath Tagore** "... *When I consider who is the Person most deserving of honour in Bengal, the first name which suggests itself to me is that of Abanindranath Tagore. He has saved the country from the sin of self-depreciation. He has raised her from the depths of humiliation and has regained for her the honoured position which was hers by right. He has earned*

²¹ Ibid. p.11. (*Abanindra, Number*, Vol. VII. 194).

²² Ibid. p.7. *An Album of Nanda Lal Bose With A Biographical Note.*

²³ Ramindranath Chakravorty: *Abanindranath Tagore, His Early Work*, Art Section Indian Museum,, Calcutta, 1951, p. 15.

for India the recognition of her contributory share in all that Humanity has realized for itself. A new era has dawned upon India through a reawaking of her art consciousness. And it is from him that the whole of India has learnt her lesson anew. A proud place has thus been assured for Bengal through his achievements....”²⁴

According to **Padam Mahesh wari** “Abanindranath Tagore achieved the same place in the Indian painting that Mahatma Gandhi got in the Indian politics. He was the pioneer and the leader of Indian artistic renaissance. He synthesized the traditional Indian style with those of the west, of China and Japan and started a style of painting, which is called the Bengal School. Besides, he changed the point of view of the Indian artists and created a new spirit of enquiry and of experiment and bold innovation among them, which deservedly earned for him the title of the “Father of Indian painting.” This great artist was born in the cultured family of Joransanko in Calcutta on 7th August, 1871.”²⁵

Abanindranath’s father and grandfather were themselves painters of considerable merit and used to paint portraits and landscapes in European style. Abanindranath made use of his father’s paint-box to paint rural scenes with cottages and palm trees. He gradually acquired considerable skill in drawing similar interesting pictures with his father’s red and blue and other colored pencils. He was then about nine years old of age. About the year 1897 when Abanindranath was about twenty-five years of age, he took private lessons from Signor Gilhardi, an Italian artist, (then vice principal of the Calcutta Government school of Art) on cast drawing, foliage drawing, pastel and life study. Later he began to attend the studio of Mr. Charles L. Palmer who had arrived from England. After undergoing a severe training under Palmer for three or four years, Abanindranath attained such a proficiency in portrait

²⁴ K.R. Kirplani: *Abanindra Number*, The Visva Bharti, 1942 May, Vol. VII, p.7.

²⁵ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Paintings*, Goel Publishing House Meerut, 2002, p.151.

painting in oils that he could finish a picture within two hours. During this period he painted many subjects in oil.²⁶

In 1900 Abanindranath went to Monghyr where a complete change took place in his artistic activities. He gave up painting in oil after European style and took up painting in watercolor. The turning point in his artistic career came when one day in his ancestral library at Joransanko house, he came across an old illuminated Indo-Persian manuscript. The marvelous drawings and calligraphy in the book fired his imagination and inspired him to reveal his own self in his art. Abanindranath then began his famous series of pictures descriptive of the familiar scenes in the life of *Sri Krishna*, the divine cowherd, which are popularly known as the "*Krishna Lila*". These productions are the effects of the subtle changes in his artistic outlook gained at Monghyr. This led him to give up his once cherished hope of becoming the Titian of Bengal. Ten years later he met E.B. Havell, then principal of the Government School of Art, Calcutta. In him the youthful enthusiast found a congenial friend and sympathizer. Both worked jointly at the Institution. Since that time the Bengal school of painting has always sought for the revival of the Indian traditional art motifs. The orientation in the artistic outlook of Abanindranath created a new awakening in India and brought about a revival of the Indian Art, which for centuries lay decayed and hidden from the public view.²⁷ The cultural nationalism of India of the second-half of the nineteenth century sought to find its expression within the ramifications of the genres and media, introduced, and often imposed by the colonisers on the colonised. The awe-inspiring authority of the Western academic-naturalistic mode of picture making and its associated technology to produce highly dramatized ceremonial pictures was first challenged by Abanindranath Tagore as something imposed by colonialism, alien to the Indian ethos. Abanindranath was the earliest self-conscious individual artist who would neither accept the authority of modes, manners and

²⁶ <http://www.calcuttaweb.com/people/antagore.shtml>

²⁷ K.R. Kirplani: *Abanindra Number*, May, Vol. VII, The Visva Bharti, 1942. pp.32, 34.

The revivalist art introduced by Abanindranath was actually a synthesis of *Ajanta*, *Mughal*, European naturalism, and Japanese wash techniques. This new art style, done mostly in watercolor and depicting Indian religious, mythological, historical and literary subjects, also gained the approval of the Indian nationalists. Abanindranath preferred historical and literary subjects rather than religious and mythical ones, and with his sophisticated taste, sense of proportion, and observation he could impart a quality of grace and charm to his works. But, excepting one or two, his disciples were less gifted.²⁹ Tagore's best known painting, *Bharat Mata* (Mother India), depicted a young woman, portrayed with four arms in the manner of *Hindu* deities, holding objects symbolic of India's national aspiration.³⁰ During his stint at the Government College of Art, Calcutta between 1905 and 1915, Abanindranath made several radical changes. He replaced the European paintings on the school walls with *Mughal* and *Rajput* paintings. He started a department of fine arts and invited well-known artists from all over India and made it possible for the students to meet them. He made arts like stencil cutting and origami compulsory for all students. Outside his responsibilities as a teacher, Abanindranath also revived the affected handloom industry in Jessore and Pabna by acquiring them and commissioning the weaver to produce clothes for his family.

In 1907, Tagore established the Indian Society of Oriental Art and founded 'The Bengal School', which was responsible in pioneering the Bengal Revivalist movement.³¹ In the Indian society of Oriental Art Abanindranath found full scope for his activities and experimentation. All the different cultural sides of Indian life received his attention. With the help of Nandlal Bose and

²⁸ S.K. Ramachandra Rao: *Chitrakala*, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, Kumaro Krupa Road, Bangalore, 20 August 2002, p. 56.

²⁹ http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/B_0400.htm

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_painting#Bengal_school

³¹ <http://www.indianartcircle.com/arteducation/abindranath.shtml>

Sain Dey, he began to study the forgotten crafts of India with a view to give back to them new life.³²

The Society of Oriental Art (1907), dream child of Abanindranath has the same glory as the Italian or Dutch or spanist school has. Achievements of the society were;

- A. Revival of the classical, medieval, folk and traditional art forms of India;
- B Recasting of periodical styles as per necessity of the contemporary period:
- C Comparative study and assessment of the greater Indian art:
- D Propagation of the traditional and rural art and craft:
- E Improvement of art and craft education in India:
- F Conservation of old art objects.³³

The Indian Society of Oriental Art was started, as a result of the social contacts of Gagendranath and Abanindrath with justice Woodruff, N.Blount, O, C. Ganguly and other art-lovers.³⁴ Abanindranath collected for the exhibition of the society in 1920, pieces of art and craft from all over India. The exhibition proved very popular and, people from all classes of society paid a visit. Even the Punjabi fruit sellers came to the society to see the exhibition. He was one of the founder of the society and was its active patron. On several occasions he helped the society by contributing liberally from his own pocket.³⁵

Abanindranath also received blessings and patronization of great people and art lovers like E.B. Havell, Percy Brown, Sister Nivedita, Rothenstein Ramananda Chattrjee, A.K. Coomaraswamy, and many others.³⁶ Under his guidance, a new generation of painters was raised, like Nandalal Bose, Asit

³² Rai Bonind Chandra: *Abanindranath Tagore*, Charker Spink & Co. Ltd. Esplanade East Calcutta, 1933, pp.41-42.

³³ *Contribution of Tagore Family of Joransanko in Art of India*: Bengal School Part 2, Curator Rabindra Nharat Museums Calcutta, p.8.

³⁴ Rabinranath Tagore: *On The Edges of Time, Rabindranath Tagore*: Rabindranath Tagore Oriental Longman, Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, 1958, p.90.

³⁵ Ibid. p.47. (*Abanindranath Tagore*. 1933).

³⁶ Ibid. p.8.

Haldar, Kshindranath Majumdar and Jamini Roy, S.N.Gupta and a host of others.³⁷ These painters cared only for Indian subject matter and sentiment, and this is an essential preliminary for any true revival of Indian painting or sculpture, since no art which is insincere, can ever be great. The whole Calcutta movement has also done much to secure protection and adequate appreciation for the masterpieces of the older schools, and some of its members have done excellent work in making copies of the frescoes at Ajanta.³⁸ Abanindranath learnt pastels, watercolors and oils from the Italian artist Gilhardy and the English painter Palmer.

The *Bagiswari Śilpa pravandhavalī* is the unique example of art of discourses in modern Indian languages.³⁹

Painting and sculpture are but two of the many attainments of this versatile genius, Abanindranath Tagore. His manifold and valuable contribution to literature in some of its important branches would rank him as one of the greatest literatures of the time. Children's literature specially has received his devoted and affectionate attention. The more important of his works on Juvenile literature are "*Raj-Kahini*", "*Sakuntala*", "*Nalaka*", "*Nahush*", "*Buro-Angla*" which please the old and the young alike. Abanindranath's paintings were exhibited in London and Paris in 1913, followed by another international exhibition in Japan in 1919. His appreciative audience included Rodin and Rothenstein. The largest number of paintings by Abanindranath-over 500-forms a part of Rabindra *Bharati* Society's collection at Joransanko.⁴⁰ Abanindranath also contributed to the Freedom struggle. Money was raised for the National Fund by singing processions carried his painting, *Bharat Mata*, made to a flag. He also contributed handloom cloth from Jessore and Pabna to the swadeshi store.⁴¹

³⁷ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing House Meerut, 2002, p. 152.

³⁸ Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, *Art and Swadeshi*, Pvt.Ltd, 1995, p.16.

³⁹ http://banglopedia.search.com.bd./HT/B_0400.htm

⁴⁰ <http://www.calcuttaweb.com/people/antagore.shtml>

⁴¹ <http://www.Indianartcircle.com/arteducation/abindranath.shtml>

So several art schools were opened at different places by his efforts, where mostly his pupils went as heads of the same. At *Santiniketan*, Nand Lal Bose was the head of the painting Department. At Lahore and Lucknow, Samarendra Nath Gupta and Asit Kumar Haldar were the heads respectively. At Jaipur and Mysore, Shailendra De and K. Venkatappa held the headship. Devi Prasad Roy Chaudhry took over at Madras and in the Govt. Art School Calcutta, Mukul De was the head of painting. Kshitindra Nath Majumdar went to Allahabad University to promulgate art and Sharda Ukil taught painting at Delhi. In this way the disciples of Abanindranath Tagore spread all over the country. But because of some basic drawbacks this Bengal school could not remain alive for long and came to an end by the last days of Abanindranath Tagore. But even than whatever efforts were done by these artists for the renaissance movement will ever remain alive in the history of Indian Painting.⁴²

In the early years of the new century the Bengal School raised a storm of eulogy and protest. Abanindranath himself chose to paint pictures on subjects taken from the epics, Indian history, or even from, more romantic tales such as those of the *Arabian Nights* or *Omar Khayyam*. The nationalists of his time interpreted his painting of subjects drawn from India's history as proper patriotism, while by others again the painting were condemned as antinational as they did not conform to traditional canons of art. Abanindranath's work and his style almost inevitably became the prototype of the whole movement. Abanindranath's paintings presented a new romanticism for which his audience was so strangely unprepared. He uses his subject-matter, his technique, and his otherworldly beauty to communicate feeling or to create a mood. He is not a moralist painting for our edification but an artist painting for our delight. His pictures of the gods are not icons meant for worship, but a poetic rendering of the imagery of the gods. The style he created found its appropriate language two major techniques. The first of these was his invention and is generally

⁴² Ibid. p.152. (*A Brief History of Indian Painting*, 2002).

called “the wash.” Abanindranath’s ‘wash’ is a kind of water colour and the choice of this medium is in itself significant. The second technique most used by the painters of the Bengal School was *tempra*. (This was not a method favoured by Abanindranath; its whole effect probably being too precise for his taste.). The compositions of the Bengal School are of great diversity but nevertheless one can point out some differences from the past. Abanindranath’s drawing, with its exquisite refinement and emphasis on silhouette, is one of the great qualities of his pictures. Colour is probably the most important of all elements in Abanindranath’s paintings. In his brighter scenes the colour is always under perfect control, measured out in careful amounts that contribute to a delicate balance. Abanindranath’s has to be acknowledged as a great colourist for he could create a new world through colour alone.⁴³ His works “*Bhārat Silpa*”, “Six Limbs of painting” and “Artistic Anatomy”, and his various contributions to the Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art. Abanindranath’s love for children has led him to devote his limitless energy to the compilation the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the sacred epics of Hindustan, for the benefit of his young friends. Abanindranath’s artistic mind expresses itself not only in the field of painting but also in diverse other ways. He was interested in music and could play beautifully on, instruments like sitar, *veena*, *esraj* and reed pipes. He takes more than an amateurish interest in gardening. He did some bas-relief work on common marble used for the purpose of preparing hand-made bread and numerous portraits in pastel and oil, and has also done some fresco painting on walls.⁴⁴ As a consequence he did not show any propensity towards narration in his paintings. His paintings were evocative of personal vision. For objectifying his very personal kind of mysticism, tinged with fantasy, he adopted and transformed cubist stylistics, without caring much for the conceptual structure of cubism. The paradigm of

⁴³ Jaya Appasamy: *Abanindranath Tagore and The Art of His Times*, Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi, 1968, pp.16-20

⁴⁴K.R. Kirplani: *Abanindra, Number*, The Visva Bharti, May Vol, viii, 1942. p.36.

modern Indian culture first found its objectification, in the visual arts, through Abanindranath.⁴⁵

The drama and stage decorations are also among the various subjects of Abanindranath's interest. He is himself an actor of no mean merit. The success of many of Rabindranath's famous plays was due in no small measure to the artistic setting designed by Abanindranath's imaginative mind. He had a great fund of humour and his rendering of comic parts in the plays of Rabindranath staged in Calcutta will long be remembered by those who have seen him acting.

Special mention may be made of his post-card paintings and sketches which he is in the habit of sending to his pupils as a sort of encouragement to them in their pursuit of art. They should be collected and published in a book form. Abanindranath had always looked after the welfare of his pupils, and besides ungrudgingly giving his help and encouragement in their work he was always ready to help them out of their difficulties with financial aid. Indeed, his timely and secret financial assistance has enabled many of his students, whose careers would otherwise have come to an end, to attain success for themselves. It was a rare fortune to be one of his pupils.⁴⁶ As a 'modern' artist it became his mission to fill in the missing emotional content into the miniature technique of India's heritage.⁴⁷

His work has been of great value in the regeneration of national culture in India. Abanindranath Tagore, who was a genius artist with a creative mind, put the Indian soul before the world. It is impossible to touch on all the points of greatness of the Master's art in a short article like this. He is undoubtedly the greatest seer and path-founder in the art of modern India and the torch that he has lit will burn for untold ages and serve as a beacon light to humble votaries of art for countless generations to come. It is not often in the history of a nation that a genius like Abanindranath is born.

⁴⁵ S.K. Rao: *Chitra Kala*, Editorial Committee, Nandagopal and Others, Bangalore, Chitrakala Parishak, p. 57.

⁴⁶ K.R. Kirplani: *Abanindra, Number*, The Visva Bharti, 1942, May Vol, viii, p. 36.

⁴⁷http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore's Contribution in Bengal School:

Rabindranath Tagore's contribution to the renaissance in India is immeasurable. About from his own superb direct contribution, Rabindranath Tagore's contribution was a source of inspiration, encouragement and help to whosoever or whatever showed any promise in literature, art, science, scholarship or infact in any field of creativity, he helped them economically as well. He radiated faith in a resurgent India and wherever he saw any talent or genius struggling for self-expression he would go to the limit of his power and resources to help him. The Bengal school of painting owes an immense debt to Rabindranath.⁴⁸

Rabindranath's Contribution in Different Fields:

Rabindranath Tagore's contributions to the world are beyond measure. His first and foremost contribution was the wealth of songs, poems and prose that he had composed. His gift to literature is nothing less than amazing. His work is enjoyed and celebrated all over the globe to this date.

Songs by Rabindranath Tagore:

In music Tagore's most famous works were in Indian classical, though as a composer he rebelled against the orthodoxy of classical music. His notable variations are derived from Bengali folk-music like the *Baul* and *Bhatiyali* music style. During his visit to Europe, he also had some training in European music. Thus some of his early songs resembled the tunes of the Border, Ballads Moore's and Irish Melodies. In later life, he tried to incorporate European style in the classical music. Among his other masterpieces are patriotic songs. Most of Tagore's songs were his poems, which he himself gave rhythm and tone.⁴⁹ His songs are part of the popular culture of Bengal.⁵⁰ Many of his patriotic

⁴⁸ *An Album of Nanda Lal Bose with a Biographical Note*, Santiniketan Asramik Sangha, Calcutta, 1956, pp.15-16.

⁴⁹ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view//108/39/>

⁵⁰ K.S. Ramaswami Sastri: *Sir Rabindranath Tagore, His Life Personality and Genius*, Akashdeep Publishing House India Delhi, 1988, p.33.

poems are still now celebrated all over India. Today; one such example is *Jan-gan -man...* which is the national anthem of India.⁵¹

Novels by Rabindranath:

Tagore's Novel is that they are absolutely modern in thought and technique. They deal with modern problems in our society and the interest is centered upon the psychological development of characters under the stress of circumstances. The number of characters in his novels is strictly limited.⁵² As a novelist Tagore gave a vivid picture of the upper and middle-class life in Bengal. Some of his famous works are *Naukadubi*, *Chokherebali*, *Gora* and *Ghare Baire*.⁵³ *Gora*, undoubtedly Tagore's most important novel, has contemporary relevance because of its theme of the concept of nationalism in a multi-racial and multi-religious community like India.⁵⁴ Tagore was the first Indian to bring an element of psychological realism in his novels.

Poems by Rabindranath Tagore:

Tagore started to compose poetry at the age of four. His first poem was published at the age of seven. Thus Tagore's achievements in poetry in later life needs no preamble. His poetry gives the reader the history of his emergence from the unreal and self centered worlds of adolescence into adulthood and the world of man and nature.⁵⁵

Dance:

Tagore was one of the first to support and bring together different forms of Indian dance. He helped revive folk dances and introducing dance forms from other parts of India, such as Manipuri, *Kathak* and *Kathakali*. He also supported modern dance and was one of the first to recognize the talent of Uday Shankar, who was invited to perform, at *Santiniketan*.

⁵¹ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view//108/39/>

⁵² B.C.Chakravarty forward, Shrinivasa K.R: *Rabindranath Tagore, His Mind and Art*, Linger Indian Publication, New Delhi, 1970. p.226.

⁵³ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view/108/39/>

⁵⁴ G.V.Raj: *Tagore The Novelist*, Sterling Publisher, Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1983, P.133.

⁵⁵ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view/108/39/>

Dramas:

Most of Rabindranath's dramas were written at *Santiniketan* and the students took part in both the performing and production sides.⁵⁶ His *Mayar Khela*, with some of the sweetest romantic songs was the first musical play in India. *Valmiki Pratibha* was another early drama by Tagore where the poet himself played the title role. "Sacrifice was the greatest drama in Bengali literature. All these dramas are vehicles of thought other than expression and they show the poet's mind powerfully working on the subject of such things in popular Hinduism as its ritual of bloody sacrifice". It is a protest against violence.⁵⁷

Lectures:

During the years of precocious adolescence. Rabindranath was absorbing the basic ideas about Hinduism and Indian, and about East and West which he later elaborated in his lecture in many lands.⁵⁸ He traveled to many countries including parts of Japan, South America, North America, Asia Hong Kong, and Europe to offer lectures, meet with people and give speeches. His work brought him to many other places around the globe including Russia, Canada, and many more.⁵⁹ Rabindranath wrote a Bengali essay for the family's monthly, *Bharti*, which contained in embryo the concept he later made his message to Japan, China, and the West. His message to China and Japan has awakened the memory of their past glory.⁶⁰

Education:

In 1901 he founded his school with the ideals of education he thought were productive and efficient. *Santiniketan*, which meant the place of peace,

⁵⁶ <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tagore.htm>

⁵⁷ Dr. Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya: *Tagore's Vision of A Global Family*, Enkay Publishing Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1987, pp.9-10.

⁵⁸ Stephen N. Hay: *Asian Ideas of East & West, Tagore & His Critics In Japan, China, India*, Cambridge, Harvard Inwin Press, 1970, p.20.

⁵⁹ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view/108/39/>

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp.20, 255.

was founded at Bolpur.⁶¹ The writing and publishing of periodicals had always been an important aspect of Joransanko life, and students at *Santiniketan* were encouraged to create their own publications and put out several illustrated magazine. The children were encouraged to follow their ideas in painting and drawing and to draw inspiration from the many visiting artists and writers.⁶²

Today *Santiniketan* has many branches that provides education, small-scale business and acts as a museum of Rabindranath Tagore. *Santiniketan* was a great success and gave birth to *Vishava bharti*; an experimental school which was built in 1915. *Vishava Bharti* has many subdivisions and subunits which work to provide the study of art, sciences and language.⁶³ *Vishava Bharti* became a national center for the arts. Rabindranath invited artists and scholars from other parts of India and the world to live together at *Santiniketan* on a daily basis, to share their cultures with *Vishava Bharti*. Without music and the fine arts, he wrote a nation lacks its highest means of national self-expression and the people remain inarticulate. He was one of the first in India to argue for a human education system that was in touch with the environmental and amide at over all development of the personality.⁶⁴

Arts:

Tagore's last role as a creative artist was that of the painter. He had no previous practice or training in drawing or painting but in his early sixties he came out alone a sudden as a master of his own peculiar style of art. It started from the erisseross scratches in the rough copy of his poems. These idle scratches, as Tagore once wrote to a friend, would urge him subconsciously at it were to give them utterance. The inspiration and urge of Tagore as an artist is different from his literary inspiration and urge.⁶⁵

⁶¹ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view/108/39/>

⁶² <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/tagore.htm>

⁶³ <http://www.utsav.org/content/view/108/39/>

⁶⁴ File://C: WINDOWS/Desktop/Rabindranath%20Tagore%20education%20-%2C...14/04/2005

⁶⁵ Sukumar Sen: *History of Bengali Literature*, Publication Sahitya Akademi New Delhi, 1960, p.318-319.

Lack of a new Indian in painting continued until Rabindranath burst in upon the world of Indian painting in a blaze of glory in the late 1920's. Rabindranath's reservations about the trends of Bengal painting even in his own *Santiniketan*. There is enough evidence to show that in his own *Santiniketan* Rabindranath blessed the endeavour to create and strengthen a new pictorial language and respected the efforts of those who were in it, but hardly ever accepted to protect and nourish people like Binod Behari and Ramkinkar who were struggling to find place for themselves.

The development of painting is itself a symptom of social and political change not as much of course as literature but certainly quite considerably. The important moment for the appearance of criticism came silently in the works of Jamini Roy, but quite articulately both in the writing and paintings of Rabindranath Tagore. His painting, which furnished the chief occasion for his critical unsmiling on the subject, was formed by Rabindranath's perception that the possibility of painting in the made of the so-called Bengal school was exhausted.

Rabindranath Tagore as an essential part of history:

He did it again in painting in the late 1920s', and his new painting and its language and content was destined to dominate Bengal painting from 1950 onwards. Tagore's work provided the beacon in the late sixties onwards, and his oeuvre suggested all the philosophical and moral problems before the painters of this age while some of his technical solutions. He would draw a woman's head and face and painter draw the hair or sari in such a fashion as would suggest the contours and mass not only of her shoulders and bust but her entire body. This was something unique and never had happened before in Indian painting. Rabindranath's out put of painting has profoundly influenced modern Bengal painting, working subterraneously pervading the painter's subterraneously in ways that no other single source has done. Tagore was

perhaps the only painter who made a different journey. He was the only great Indian painter who, starting with his heritage of Oriental art, gradually proceeded towards the European.⁶⁶

Although Rabindranath stood against all kinds of ritual and awe-struck obeisance to institutions sanctified by convention or power and although he would himself like to chart his own course of his subjective expression in art, he was not in responsive to individual quest to find the relevant significant in one's own tradition, for positing one's own identity in time and space. He would not have persuaded Nandlal Bose, the foremost of the disciples of Abanindranath to head the art of school at *Santiniketan*, at a time when Tagore himself had just started painting.⁶⁷

Tagore discarded likeness or representation of the natural object and straightway began with the unseen and imaginary shapes stored up in memory or dream. He freed himself from ties of realism. Throughout his artistic career he continued to use ink: indeed, the great bulk of his work is in that medium. He did not try his hand at oils. Certainly not more than twice or thrice, of which he tore off one in sheer impatience. Oil takes a long time to dry and he could not afford to wait, once the urge to paint was upon him. On the contrary, he used to pour spirit into the inks to help them dry quickly. His first pictures were all drawn in black indelible ink. He put layer upon layer of bright, transparent ink which scarcely shaded off to lighter tints, he avoided shading and used his ink as transparent glaze after the fashion of the Old Masters. So that the colour glowed. He never mixed his colours, never used mixed paints. He did not use a palette; the paper was his palette. Whenever he wanted highlights he erased the ink and applied tempera, pastel or crayon, that is put a spot of opaque paint which threw up the light. His greatest achievement was the way he made his colours attain a rare luminosity. His shapes would often create the splendours

⁶⁶ Roopa-Lekha, Vole. LX, J. of All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, Raj Marg, New Delhi, December 1988, pp.46-48.

⁶⁷ S.K. Ramachandra Rao: *Chitrakala*, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Art Complex, Kumaro Krupa Road, Bangalore, 20 August 2002 p. 58.

of an impasto, hard shell-like enamel. Rabindranath used his colour with the same effortless skill. This unique synthesis, this unity of colour and line ushered in a new chapter in the history of Indian painting.⁶⁸

Tagore had long discussions on his art with Roman Rolland who wrote in his Book, 'Inde-journal', on 3rd July 1926 " ----- Tagore was discussing on his application of colour in paintings.⁶⁹ His range of colours favours the deep tones, black and indigo, umber, dull reds and greens and deep Yellows.⁷⁰ His love goes violet and blue and he was more liking for green." Rabindranath transformed his lack of formal training of art into an advantage and opened new horizons in the use of line and colours. It is evident that in his search of newer form of expression in line and colour.⁷¹ Up to the period of Kshanika, observes ups and downs of his creativity but after 1900 his colours, lines and forms started to get definite meaning and Tagore became more conscious about drawing, linear and colour perspectives. An untitled painting showing a view through windows is a remarkable example of his experiment and perspective. 1900-1920 was the period of evaluation. During this time Tagore's eagerness for rehabilitating his spontaneous art got recognition of some German Extremists. Tagore returned with a concrete idea of his doings from Europe in 1921. The new art wave of our country is at best the contribution of Rabindranath, not borrowed from the west. He became both a painter and craftsman. In painting his attention was shared between two principal subjects-the majesty of the mountains and the beauty of flowers. Craft, wood work became his most absorbing passion. Self-taught, he developed his own style in both fields. Kramrisch appreciated his contributions in beautiful language...

⁶⁸ *Roopa-Lekha*, Vole. Lx, J. of All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, Raj Marg, New Delhi, December 1988, pp.46-47.

⁶⁹ <http://www.indianartcircle.com/arteducation.Modernart6.shtml>
www.passionart.com/kejriwal/art.html

⁷⁰ Stella Kramrisch: *Form Elements in the Visual work of Rabindranath Tagore*, Lalit Kala Contemporary, No.2, 1964, pp.38, 39.

⁷¹ <http://www.indianartcircle.com/arteducation.Modernart6.html>

Rabindranath Tagore is a maker of Form. To the art of India of today he gives back the dignity of its craft.⁷²

His paintings have more or less the same quality as his drawing; an air of being done on the spur of the moment, awakening a new sincerity, which ruthlessly eliminates all, that is superfluous. His numerous paintings of this period disclosed new aspects in the appearance of things. The artist showed for the first time an inclination, which continued throughout his later work except for a few momentary lapses, to integrate lines, gestures and rhythm with colour. An abstract feeling for pure colour was also seen emerging.⁷³ Between 1928 and 1939 Rabindranath painted not less than 2'000 pictures, 1,800 of paintings are in Rabindra Sadna, Pictures. The Tagore memorial Museum at *Santiniketan*.⁷⁴

Rabindranath Tagore's famous world appearance as a painter in France in 1930 was not sudden. Long before the Paris exhibition which vaulted him to worldwide painterly fame. In spring 1930, when on a tour to France, Tagore was advised, by some art critics of local newspapers who saw his paintings to hold on exhibition in Paris. He held the first public and international exhibition of his paintings in Paris in May 1930, at the *Gallerie Pigalle*. The Exhibition was later held in the different countries in Europe in the same year, but India and his home town Calcutta had the honour of hosting it only in 1931, a year later of Paris exhibition. The exhibition remained open to public from the 5th to the 19th May 1930.⁷⁵

Art critics have pointed out that Tagore was trying to express in his lines and colours something different from what he did in his poetry and songs. If he sought peace and enlightenment in his songs, he seems to explore darkness and mystery in his drawings. Dark creatures and haunting landscapes of another,

⁷² *Contribution of Tagore Family of Joransanko In Art of India*: Bengal School part 1, Publication Curator Rabindra Bharti Museum, Calcutta, pp.12-13.

⁷³ AJit Mookerjee: *Modern Art in India*, Publication Calcutta, New Delhi, 1956, p.15.

⁷⁴ Rabindranath Tagore: *Twelve Painting*, Rupa & Company, Calcutta 1961. p.1.

⁷⁵ <http://www.Indianarticle.com/arteducation/Modernart6.shtml>

primordial and marvelous world which constituted Tagore's work puzzle and delight the world. Vasudev also pointed to another interesting aspect when he said that though Tagore tried to give a certain direction to Indian art through *Santiniketan* his own style was distinctively different from the typical *Santiniketan* style.⁷⁶ Duchess Anna de Noailles, in her introductory remark in the catalogue of the exhibition of Tagore's painting "To me it is like climbing a staircase of dreamland." After the conclusion of Paris exhibition, exhibitions were held in England, Denmark, Sweden, Rome, Germany and Russia in Europe. Later exhibition were also held in USA and Canada. The exhibition of painting drew an unprecedented overwhelming admiration in Germany. It was shown in Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Dusseldorf, Stuttgart and other places in Germany.⁷⁷

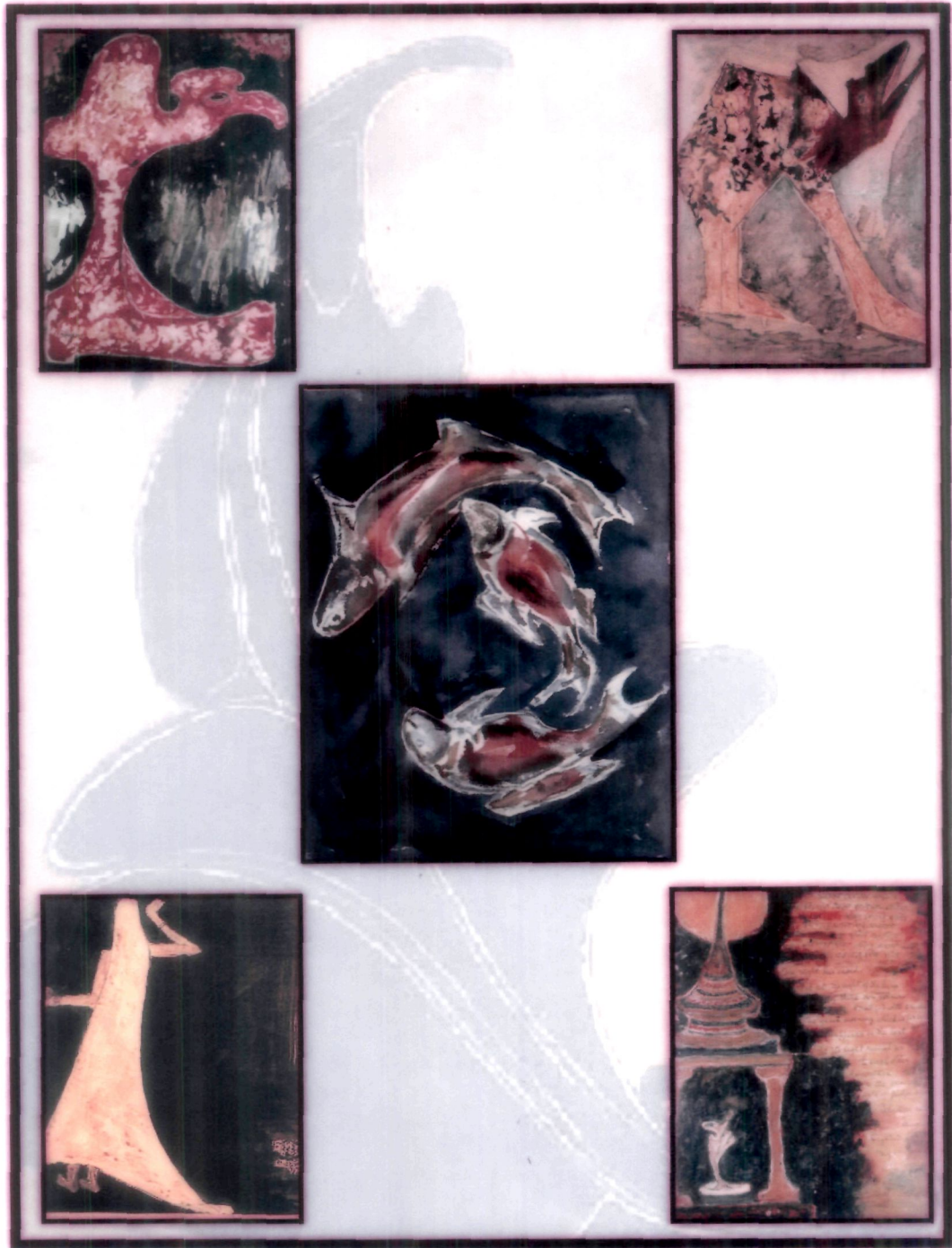
Rabindranath became the voice of India spiritual heritage and for India, especially for Bengal became a great living institution. His relentless passion for his work was amazing. His total works amounts to about thirty volumes. Tagore remains a legend to Indian and legacy to people. Tagore's contribution to the art of India remains one of the most important till date. Although he was now a world figure, his greatest literary phase was over, and in Bengal he was beginning to be respected more for his past achievements than for any continuing power. Outside India, the situation was far worse. In many countries, he was admired as the philosopher and the mystic, but in England his reputation as a writer had gradually declined.

This is because his contribution of achievements in all these fields is so enormous and gradually that makes him as an exceptional artist and thinker of India and therefore he is remembered as one of the greatest sons of the India who gave message not to only India but the entire mankind of the globe.

⁷⁶ <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/mp/2005/01/03stories/2005010301750400.htm>

⁷⁷ <http://www.Indianarticle.com/arteducation/Modernart6.shtml>

Chapter -3



Chapter III

Social & Cultural Development of

Rabindranath Tagore

Social and Cultural thought of Rabindranath Tagore:

There have been pioneers in religion, politics, social work and education fields in India during the last century.¹ Nineteenth century socio-religious reform movements erupted simultaneously from all sides. The *Brahma Samaj* movement of Bengal, *Arya Samaj*, *Prathana Samaj*, Ram Preshna Missions, Servants of India society are some of the noted movements of this period. They led and prepared the country for a social order, which was a necessity of the time.²

All great movements of human renewal have had their prophets. Bengal's prophet was Rabindra Nath Tagore. Tagore, who came after Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Ram Krishna and Bankim Chanda Chatterjee, was the soul-mate of every one of them and gathered up into his personality the essence of what they had thought and taught. He wrote and sang with intuition and passion of all the great and the small things that marked the 'Bengali's re-entry into the life everlasting.'³ Tagore's thoughts and writings deal with the problem of women, their status and role in society and their education –not only in his capacity as a sensitive, socially conscious poet, but also as a leading social thinker and educationist in the country. Tagore's social

¹Rabindranath Tagore: *A Century Volume*, Published by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1861-1961, p.74.

²S.R. Bakshi: *Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Om Publication, 2001, p.1.

³Ramanana Chatterjee: *The Golden Book of Tagore*, Published by Globulin Book Commuttee, Calcutta, 1931, p.55.

thoughts have huge area but there are some Social thoughts, which are explained in a precise manner.⁴

Condition of the Women:

Rabindranath Tagore, had direct role in social uplifting of women and spreading of women's education. Due to their untiring efforts, the widow Remarriage Act of 1856, legislation against Child marriage was regulated and the Sharda Act of 1929 were passed.⁵ It is not easy to evaluate the condition of Hindu women during the second half of the nineteenth century. The life of an average Hindu woman was difficult and pitiable owing to the existing social customs and practices of the time. The present study is made against the background of Bengali society which is not very different from Hindu societies existing in other parts of India.

At that time the condition of Hindu widow and child widow was still worst. They were neglected and ill, treated from her very childhood. The Girl Child grew up as helpless and was destined to suffer.⁶ Tagore focused on the other problems faced by women of that time such as –

1. The plight of the widows in the joint family who were economically exploited and prevented from remarriage.
2. The struggle of modern educated women for equality and freedom in the male dominated conservative society
3. The complications that arose in the family had set up when the modern women participated in the freedom movement.⁷
4. Dowry system was yet another evil that prevailed in the Hindu society during the period under investigation. Dowry had to be paid, as a rule, at the time of the girl's marriage.

⁴ Usha Sharma, B.M. Sharma: *Women Education in British India*, Common Wealth Publication, 1995, p. 301.

⁵ Rana Kranti: *Modern Working Women and The Development Debate*, Kanishka, 1998, p.164.

⁶ Monmayee Basu: *Hindu Women and Marriage Law*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.1, 6.

⁷ Madan Ramesh: *Women in India & Japan A Comparison*, Publication Manak, 2004, p.85.

5. *Purdah* was another great hindrance for women. She had to stay in the inner most part of the house and had to live in strict seclusion.⁸

So during Tagore's time Child marriage, the *Purdah* system and *Sati Pratha* were practiced.⁹ Rabindranath Tagore was not only a political thinker but also a writer, and poet too, He used the power of his pen to show the ills of society. Such as short stories, one is struck by the vividness and the strength of Tagore's women characters. This is especially true of *Cokheray Bali*, and other classic play *Dena Poana*, he has vividly described the evil effects of dowry.¹⁰

Status of Women:

Tagore had a great regard for women. He has upheld that the caressing love of women is very essential for the proper development of the child. To him the nature of men and women are different. Tagore finds good qualities of head and heart among the women in general. He maintains that "Woman is endowed with the passive qualities of Chastity, modesty, devotion and power of self sacrifice in a greater measure than man is." Tagore is conscious of the powers hidden in women. He thinks that good of human beings can be achieved only when there is a happy combination of male and female.¹¹

Rabindranath points out that "women is the builder and moulder of nation's destiny". Women can know liberation only when they too acquire earning power, shoulder responsibility, speak out against injustice and confidently go about building a future for themselves.¹²

Tagore does not think of women's confined activities within the narrowly limits of the four walls. He maintains "I do not mean to imply that domestic life is the only life for a woman. "I mean that the human world is the woman's world, be it domestic or be it full of the other activities of life which

⁸ Ibid. pp. 7-8. (*Hindu Women and Marriage Law*.)

⁹ Ibid. P. II (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*)

¹⁰ Mary M. Lago: *Rabindranath Tagore*, Twayne Publishers A Division of G.k. Hall & Co. Boston, 1976, p. 121.

¹¹ Ibid. p.13, (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*.)

¹² H.L. Kaila: *Women, Work and Family*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur and, New Delhi, 2005, p. 61.

are human activities and not merely abstract efforts to organise.” Tagore wishes women to inculcate higher power of reasoning and initiative and so he wants that “women should use her power to break through the surface and go to the center of things, wherein the mystery of life dwells, an eternal source of interest.

Tagore feels that women are always a source of inspiration for man. Man’s constructive energies get a fillip only with the loving caresses of women. Tagore has warned society of the imminent dangers of loosening the string too much. He wishes women to be given due place but never does he like that they should be made impropportionately domineering. Thus Tagore favours a specific place of women in society, the possible roles which she has to play, the future responsibilities due to her, and the future picture of the social order.¹³

Political thought of Rabindranath Tagore:

*“I believe that when anti-human forces spread their dominion, individuals with firm faith in humanity are born, who become acutely conscious of the menace to man and fearlessly fulfil their destiny through insult and isolation.”*¹⁴

In considering the social and political ideas of Rabindranath Tagore. The first thing, which strikes one is that they were deeply influenced by his view of man and his place in the universe.¹⁵ Tagore was born and lived during at a most crucial function of history, a period, which was fraught with political upheavals, downfall of imperialism, renaissance in, and growth of suppressed nations. He was also an architect of democracy on the world political scene, when it was period of struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed. In this period of political turmoil Tagore was there to contribute his share of political activity. Individuals make a society and a society ultimately forms a state.

¹³ S.R.Bakshi: *Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenge of Today*, Om Publication, 2001, pp.14, 16.

¹⁴ Alex Aronson: *Rabindranath Through Western Eyes*, Published by Shyamal Bhattacharya, Calcutta, 1978, p.39.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 145. Rabindranath Tagore, (*A Century Volume*, 1961).

Tagore thought about the political ideology, individual, the society, and the state.

A. Individual:

Tagore says, "The natural law of human nature is sociability". In fellowship man finds his true refuge in society. There man may be deprived of everything, but he has an abundant satisfaction in the human soul." "Man has two sides-the individual and the social. One is unreal without the other" ¹⁶. Thus his ideal of a world where there will be friendship and co-operation among all men and mutual regard and respected among all people.

B. Society:

Society- "Society is the expression of those normal and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature".¹⁷ Society has been used in different connotations. It may mean a community, an association, a group, or a nation. Tagore's views are clear when he asserts that man has two sides one the individual and the other the social. It means that for him society is an equally important aspect of man. Tagore finds that society is to meet certain higher ends welfare of the individual. Tagore product of the society.¹⁸

State / Society:

Tagore placed the greatest emphasis on the freedom and dignity of the individual, he was equally conscious of his obligations to society. He drew a distinction between state and society, and held that one of the greatest achievements of the ancient, Indian society had survived through many ups and downs of history because it had defined the welfare of society as largely a non-political function and placed it in the hands of the community rather than the State. According to Tagore, in Europe the Center of national life was located in the State while in India it was base on the community. So Tagore's views a

¹⁶ Ibid. pp.33-34. (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenge of Today*, 2001)

¹⁷ Tapati Dasgupta: *Social Thought of Rabindranath Tagore A Historical Analysis*, Abhinav Publications Hauz Khas, 1993, p.47.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 35-36. (*Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*)

clear demonstration of the way in which society and state has been separated in the Indian conception. Tagore believed and repeatedly declared that the caste system and its attendant practice of untouchability were among the darkest blots on Indian society.¹⁹

Tagore has given more importance to society than to the state. In a nutshell Tagore's views on society that "*Samaj* or society" is the key concept in his social philosophy. The goal of the *samaj* is to advance the 'civilization of the people. It is only the strong, confident and self-reliant individuals, who can, in their turn, take the responsibility of sustaining and directing this live society. The function of the state is protective, while that of the *samaj* is largely promotive and creative.²⁰ Society is itself a great co-operative endeavour and it is through co-operation that mankind has survived and triumphed over all other orders of living beings. He held that through co-operation men and women can satisfy their economic needs as well as create conditions of social well-being and cultural progress.²¹

(i) **Patriotism:** About his own country Tagore says, "I shall be born in India again and again; with all her poverty, misery and wretchedness I love India best."²² Tagore said, "I do not believe in those leaders who have succeeded in moulding opinions, but not men".²³

Struggle For Independence: Tagore was among those who raised the slogan of freedom. "He recognized the right of each nation to work out its own destiny, but he also proclaimed that national claims must never encroach upon our human obligations."

Internationalism:

According to Rabindranath Tagore "Nationalism is the training of whole people for a narrow ideal" and proceedings from this abstract theory, he calls

¹⁹ Ibid. p.146, Rabindranath Tagore. (*A Century Volume*)

²⁰ Ibid. p.37.

²¹ Ibid. p.148. Rabindranath Tagore. (*A Century Volume*)

²² Ibid. p. 48. (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenge of Today.*)

²³ *Tagore Asian Outlook*: Shakti Das street Calcutta, 1961, p.87.

India a land of no nation. He was the most uncompromising critic of British rule in India and he has never tried to be popular. He has spoken truth, cruel, and unpleasant. He believed in work-not excitement²⁴ "Tagore was convinced that the nations of the world can only find happiness and real wealth by friendship and cooperation." He associates himself with the entire humanity and says, "Unless the problem of entire mankind is solved, that of one's own nation only can not be solved"²⁵. Rabindra Tagore was a great spiritual anchor to Indian in the midst of the storm of the freedom struggle.

Humanism: Tagore's humanism is visible in his awareness of life and problems of the people around him and in his appraisal and criticism of those problems in the context of the wide humanity and mankind. There were very few Indian writers of that period who could discern the temper of their age with such keenness and subtlety and reflect it with such fidelity as Tagore.²⁶ The Indian National Anthem is one of Tagore's greatest deep humanist gifts to India.²⁷ Rabindranath dream of a harmony of Universal humanity among the people of different origins through freedom of mind and spiritual Sovereignty²⁸. In this way, Tagore believed that peace and unity could be achieved through cultural contacts, through education, and it could be one of the best meeting- grounds for humanity was the University. It could create opportunities for revealing different people to one another. Tagore could never tolerate insult to humanity in any part of the world. He wrote in a letter: "To break through the coil of nationalistic snobbery will be the work of my last years."

²⁴ Sochin Sen: *Political Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*, Asher & Co 36 Simla Street Calcutta, 1929, pp.19, 62.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 71.(*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenge of Today*)

²⁶ T.R. Sharma: *Perspective on Rabindranath Tagore*, Vimal Prakashan Publisher & Distributor Ram Nagar, Ghazibad, 198, p.63.

²⁷ Rabindranath Tagor: *A Century Volume*, Sahitya Akademi, 1861-1961.p 152.

²⁸ APJ Abdul Kalam & Arun.K. Tiwari: *Gulding Soul Dialogues on The Purpose of Life*, Ocean Books Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi, 2005, p.66.

Economic Thought:

Economy plays an important role in life. Tagore was unhappy at the increasing concentration of the people in urban areas. He held that constant and intimate contact with nature is necessary not only for the physical but also for the mental and spiritual health of the individual.²⁹

India is primarily a land of villages. The main occupation of the people there is Agriculture. It was only with dawn of independence that an all-round change enveloped the entire society. The wide-spread poverty due to the low yield of agriculture moved Tagore. All his efforts were therefore, diverted towards improving the lot of the suffering masses of the country. The demarcation of poor and rich also appeared stifling to him.

Rural Economy:

Tagore felt that the bipolar division of people between rich and poor, the Zamindars and non-Zamindars had greatly influenced the economic condition of the people. The toiling masses do not get their due share. He was therefore against such a system. About the relation between the poor and the rich he feels extremely sorry and says that the difference in the economy of the village and city is primarily due to the nature of the two societies. The differences between the village and town grow with the growth of society while in the beginning the center of activity is common. Tagore had always been inclined towards harmony and synthesis. He is a person believing in the principle of the golden mean. *Secondly*, the new industrial economic system with its emphasis on profit motive and material "self-aggrandisement" has cut at the root of the Indian social system. *Thirdly*, with the advent of the British, the power of the state emerged in a more ruthless and all persuasive form ...Rapid urbanization in its turn has affected the economy considerably. The basis of economy was rooted in the general interests of society and so was the basis of production.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid. p.147 Rabindranath Tagore, (*A Century Volume*,)

³⁰ Ibid. pp.24 -26. (*Rabindra Nath Tagore And The Challenges of Today*.)

This combination of the agricultural with industry and craft had served to meet the major requirements of life for the vast majority of the people. Tagore also welcomed the fact that this system had developed among Indians an attitude of contentment and philosophical acceptance of life.³¹

2. Urban Economy:

The natural implication of mechanization is that man is replaced by machine. Production is speedy. The cost of production is reduced. Machine made goods compete favorably with those made in cottage industries and thus mechanization comes in the economic field in direct competition and ultimately in conflict with human beings. With the environment so encumbered with machinery man also became mechanical. This expansion challenged man in all aspects.

In the urbanized industrial economy material wealth inevitably grows. Moreover, he sees good points in cities too. "Tagore does not think that the city is the repository of all evil, and the village of all good. He believes that with the growth of cities, the concepts of individuality took firm roots, with the growth of villages, evolved the town". Diversified activities grow round the seat of government" Although Rabindranath Tagore was not in favour of factories yet he thought that we could not reject the factory system. Tagore was very keen to Implement cooperative mechanized cultivation in his Estates. Tagore's attention was not limited to agriculture only.³² Tagore believes in the spiritual evolution of man. As Tagore rightly says: *In the modern civilization, for which an enormous number of men are used as materials, and human relationships have in a large measure become utilitarian, man is imperfectly revealed. For man's revelation does not lie in the fact that he is a power, but that he is a spirit.*³³

³¹ Ibid. 147. Rabindranath Tagore, (*A Century Volume*.)

³² Ibid. pp.23-31. (*Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*.)

³³ B.C. Chakravarty forward Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar: *Rabindranath Tagore*, Young India Publishing, New Delhi, 1970, p.256.

Tagore knew India as a land of villages. Many anthropologists took the position that the village was a kind of microcosm in which the macrocosm of the wider world was reflected in miniature. He examined the networks based on the economic and that stretch out from the village.³⁴ Tagore was a great believer in co-operation in every sphere of human life. He thought that the answer to India's poverty lay in the adoption of the co-operative method in production and distribution of every type and particularly in the field of Indian agriculture.³⁵ Rabindranath Tagore also highlights in their writings made reference to woman's economic independence.³⁶

Thus can be seen Tagore's concern for the villages, the rural and the urban economics and also the warning issued by him against the tendency of blindly throwing society into excessive industrialization? The utility of the cooperative principle, both in the rural and the urban economy, has been established. So Tagore's economic philosophy was based on a cooperative mechanized economy.

Education:

Tagore, the great Educational philosopher, preached the creed of internationalism to establish international brotherhood and thus found 'one world' where all people would live in a state of happiness. Her aims of education belong to the realm of philosophical thought, the realm of truth and peace. Here lies the greatness of Tagore, who is a practical Educationist.

Means of Education:

Education means to bring out the innate abilities of the child and give them training. Love of truth, and Love of Good are in the child.³⁷ Education is a process of learning. The human child learns both from Nature and Society. Nature as a means of learning provides a surrounding for the child to learn.

³⁴ Veena Das: *The Oxford India Companion to Society and Social Anthropology*, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 48-49.

³⁵ Ibid. p. 148, Rabindranath Tagore. (*A Volume Century*,)

³⁶ Madan Ramesh: *Women in India & Japan A Comparison*, Manak, 2004. p. 85.

³⁷ A.V. Suryanarayans: *Tagore As Educationist*, M.S.R. Murty & Co. Vishaka Patnam, 1962. p. 39.

Society provides a social environment for the development of the child. Tagore regards both Nature and Society as potent means of education.

Nature as a Means of Education:

Tagore believed that there was a kinship between nature and man. He thought that real education was that which brought about a full development of the human personality. It was possible only in unison with nature. Ignorance is a great evil. It also permeates other evils. So it is desired to improve a society. Efforts should be made to spread maximum education. Though Tagore spoke for mass education, he did not favour any dilution of the standards of education. The aim of mass education can be fulfilled only when knowledge is available in the language of the masses. The development of the language of the masses is very essential for their awakening. Moreover, apart from the formal sources of education there are informal sources of education also. Since education had to be mass oriented, it also had to be within the masses of the common man. He appreciated the ancient pattern of Indian education because it was close to nature and also inexpensive. One more reason why Tagore deprecated western education was its developed, formal nature and extensive paraphernalia.

III Education Institutes:

Tagore translated his dream of ideal education into action by establishing institutions that educated people according to his plans. He sought to put his various ideals of education to work through various institutions at *Santiniketan*, *Sriniketan* and *Visva-Bharti*.³⁸

I. Santiniketan:

Rabindranath Tagore founded a small School in Southern Bengal at a place called *Santiniketan*, a hundred miles North West of Calcutta, in the year,

³⁸ S.R.Bakhshi: *Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Om Publication, New Delhi, pp. 83-84.

Year 1901.³⁹ At *Santiniketan*, he wanted to establish an ideal school. He was unhappy with the schools he was sent to in his boyhood, he thought English schools were cut off from Indian life, society and culture. In choosing *Santiniketan* he had three distinct goals to make the children grow up in an ideal physical environment, close to nature, an education to balance the city and the village in a changing India and to impart knowledge capable of accepting a large world.⁴⁰ The school is now world famous. Among its teachers have been artists of reputation such as Nandalal Bose and Asitkumar Haldar, writers such as Ajitkumar Chakrabarti and Satischandra Ray, Philosophers such as the poet's eldest brother, **Dwijendranath Tagore**, and English men such as C.F. Andrews and 'Willie' Pearson.⁴¹

II. Sriniketan:

It is Rabindranath Tagore's international University at *Santiniketan*. The word "Sri" contains the idea of prosperity, of welfare resulting from activity and growing into healthy beauty. The name *Sriniketan* reveals Rabindranath's hopes and ideals.⁴² Because he wanted that the rural folk may also be able to lead a life of happiness which could not be possible in the absence of the proper education, and training, which the institution provided. "Rabindranath established *Sriniketan* side by side with *Santiniketan*, because he thought that there would be no real emancipation of our country if the so called education of the townsmen remained their monopoly and failed to reach the vast multitude in the country side. So he took up the uplift of our villages. *Sriniketan* became the center", *Sriniketan* took up various activities simultaneously.⁴³ Such as Economist, agriculturalists, social workers, doctors, midwives, healthcare workers, and specialists in various fields of rural industry and education,

³⁹ Bhudev Chaudhary K.G. Subramanyan: *Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Indian and Indian Institute of Advance Study, 1988, p.153

⁴⁰ Mohit Chakrabarti: *Philosophy of Education of Rabindranath Tagore*, Atlantic Publisher & Distributor, Ansari Road, New Delhi, 1998. p.30.

⁴¹ Edward Thomson: *The Heritage of India Series Rabindranath Tagore His Life and Work*, Y.M.C.A. Published House, Russell Street Calcutta, 1974, pp.75-76.

⁴² Marjorie Sykes: *Rabindranath Tagore*, Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. 1945. p. 95.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 91. (*Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*)

experimented and worked with the villagers on different aspects of rural problems.⁴⁴

III Visva- Bharti:

Visva-Bharti to translate his ideas into reality. No amount of theories and lectures could be a substitute for a way of life which practised this ideal. *Visva- Bharti* was to be an institution where the world makes home in a single nest.⁴⁵ The education of the girls at *Visva- Bharti* was, therefore as fully conceived that of the boys, the physical, and intellectual. Vocational, cultural, and social aspects of their personality receiving as full an attention as those of the latter, while matters specially associated with their sex also duly received the importance they deserved.⁴⁶

So in this way *Visva-Bharti*, an institution whose stated objective was to study the mind of man in its realisation of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view. When it started *Visva-Bharti* was not a university that gave away degrees. It was conceived to be a meeting place of the East and the West where sorters and students would line in common fellowship, studying each other's culture. To get women in the main stream, Rabindranath Tagore tried to inculcate in women the spirit and values of the society by spreading knowledge with the help of educational institutions.⁴⁷ The practical education of women should naturally be different from that of man, because they have different physical and mental make-up. Tagore, a pioneer of co-education in this country, dearly stated his convictions.

Nari Bhavan:

As early as 1908, a girls' section was started in Tagore's institution at *Santiniketan*, and co-education of boys and girls, went on vigorously for two

⁴⁴ Amarty Sen, Nobel Laureate [www. Cabinet. Org.](http://www.Cabinet.Org) Calcutta Library network (Cabinet).

⁴⁵ Santa Bhattacharya: *All India's Conference 78th Annual Session*, Bharatiyam Eastern Zonal Cultural Center Salt Lake, Kolkata, January 2002, p. 72.

⁴⁶ Usha Sharma, B. N. Sharma: *Women Education in British India*, Publication, and Common Wealth Publication, 1995, p.308.

⁴⁷ Jharta Bhawana: *Women and Politics in India*, Deep & Deep Publication Rajouri Garden, New Delhi, 1998, p.56.

years, after which the section had to be closed down owing to certain administrative difficulties during those days of meager resources for the institution. In 1928, a hall residence, known as '*Nari Bhavan*', was started with four girls. The permanent hostel for girls, known as '*Sri Bhavana*' (later '*Sri Sadna*'), was ready by 1929. The policy of the institution being professedly co-educational, the girl-students attended all its academic departments on the same footing as the boys, with practically the same course of study, and were required to show the same level of attainment. Teaching of subject like Domestic Science, Cooking, Needle work etc., specially meant for women; and the special courses in Art, crafts, Music and Dancing provided in respective departments of the institution were particularly popular with the senior women students, which not only enriched their cultural equipment but also proved very useful for their future independent careers.⁴⁸

II. His Aims:

He started social and religious reforms movements as a strategy for uplifting the population. This was later given more content and focus by the development of rural India through the basic education. Basic aim was; -

A. Intellectual Aims:

Tagore says: "We touch the world not with our mind, but with our Books." The intellectual aim of education for Tagore is the development of the faculty of assimilation, critical appraisal and logical thinking in the domains of ideas.

B. Physical Aims:

"Education of the body in the real sense, according to him, does not exist in play and exercise but in applying the body systematically to some useful work." Great emphasis on physical education, that in his school Tagore provided full freedom for the development of body along with that of mind.

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 306-307, (*Women Education in British India*, 1995.)

C. Moral and Spiritual Aims:

Tagore, by temperament was a religious man. Religion was the basis of his entire philosophy. Obviously, its impact is apparent when he thinks of education also. In education, his religiosity was expressed seeking to establish moral and spiritual values in it. He wrote: "Real moral training consists not in foisting moral teachings like external decorations, but in making religious and morality on intimate part of life."

A social education was purposeless for Tagore for he thought, "the fundamental purpose of education is not merely to enrich ourselves through the fullness of knowledge, but also to establish the bond of love and friendship between man and man." Education is also associated with refinement. Refinement is the domain of delicacies and niceties of life. This aspect of our life is cultivated through Art. For cultivation and development of Art he wished that all concerned with education should be directed to take sufficient care that art of all varieties including fine arts and Music may be given an appropriate place in curriculum.

D. General Aims:

Tagore did not fully agree with the utilitarian aim of education. For him education should be only partially inspired by the utilitarian motive. He stated "Knowledge has two departments: One pure knowledge; the other utilitarian Knowledge".⁴⁹

Rabindranath Tagore told that my idea was that education should be a part of life itself and must not be detached from it and it be made into something abstract.⁵⁰ Tagore believed that peace and unity could be achieved through cultural contacts through education. He recommended that from the very

⁴⁹ S.R.Bakhshi: *Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Om Publication, New Delhi, pp. 73-81.

⁵⁰ Sisir Kumar Das: *The English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore*, vol.3 Sahitya Akademi. p.642.

beginning children should be educated so that their minds remained free from all racial prejudices.⁵¹

Tagore believed that education of any country should be rooted in its native soil.⁵² So Tagore's educational efforts were ground breaking in many areas. He was one of the first in India to argue for a human education system that was in touch with the environment and aimed at over all development of the personality. *Santiniketan* became a model for vernacular instruction. Rabindranath Tagore by his efforts and achievements in part of a global network of pioneering educators such as Rousseau Pestatozze, Froebel who have strive to create non-authoritarian learning system appropriate to their respective surrounding. Rabindranath shows through education the avenues of renewal for mankind. As every man differs, so is every difference in instinctive appeal.

Culture Thought:

Rabindranath Tagore says, "Communication of life can only be achieved through a living agency. And culture, which is the life of mind, can only be imparted through man to man. Culture grows and moves and multiplies itself in life. Man's intellect has a natural pride of its culture. Culture only acknowledges excellence in inner perfection, not in any external success."⁵³ Rabindranath Tagore's views on culture are significant for three reasons- First they did not remain static; Second, he recognised the need for a split between technological civilisational forces identified with the imperial mission, and the spiritual cultural traditions, but at another level he was not willing to accept of difference. Universal or common world-wide culture was an ideal which he propounded. This was a development of humanist thought and is central to the beginning of colonial struggles. In order to emphasize their humanity, colonial

⁵¹ Shakti Das Gupta: *Tagore Asian Outlook*, Nava Bharti Shyama Charan De Street, Calcutta, 1961, p.86.

⁵² J.R. Sharma: *Perspective on Rabindranath Tagore*, Vimal Prakashn Ram Nagar, Ghazibad, 1981, p. 118.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 47. (*Social Thought of Rabindranath Tagore A Historical Analysis*,)

societies accepted the idea of “universalism” which was also an argument, which aided the expansion of imperialism and capitalism.⁵⁴

Tagore says I have no distrust of any culture because its foreign character. I believe that the stretch of such forces is necessary for the vitality of our intellectual nature. It is admitted that much of the spirit of Christianity of our intellectual nature. It is admitted that much of the spirit of Christianity runs counters, not only to the classical culture of Europe, but to the European temperament altogether. The same thing is happening in India. The European culture has come to us not only with its knowledge with its velocity. Though our assimilation of it is imperfect and the consequent aberration numerous. Still it is rousing our intellectual life from its inertia of formal habits into glowing consciousness by the very contradiction it offers to our own mental tradition.⁵⁵ The main river of Indian culture has flowed in four streams-

1. The Vedic
2. The Puranic
3. The Buddhist
4. The Jain

It had its source in the heights of the Indian consciousness.

His Literary Mission Poetry and Letters

Rabindranath Tagore, one of the greatest poets, not only of India but also of the whole world is the only Indian who received the Nobel Prize for literature (1913). He was a worthy representative in the modern times of a long tradition of great poets of India which included such immortals like *Adi Kavi Valmiki, Jaidev, Kalidas, Amir Khusro, Tulsidas, Surdas, Kabirdas, Abdul*

⁵⁴ Jasbir Jain, Veena Singh: *Contesting Postcolonialism*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 2nd ed. 2004, p. 36.

⁵⁵ Sisir Das Gupta: *The English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol.2, Second edition, Plays, Stories, Essays, Sahitya Akademi, 1996, p.486.

Rahim Khankhana, Malik Mohd, Jaise and Mirza Ghalib, who have enriched the vast canvas of Indian literature.⁵⁶

As a poet Rabindranath's appeal is perennial like of *Kalidasa*, Li Po, Shakespeare, *Hafiz*, Rilke or Anna akhmatova. But he was also an outstanding man of ideas very much occupied with the deep and complex problems of modern times who, unusually for a poet, tried to put some of those ideas into practice.⁵⁷

The first of the twentieth century is generally known as the age of Tagore in modern Bengali literature. As the second half of the nineteenth century is generally known as Bankim era, so the first half of the twentieth century may be called the Rabindranath era. Rabindranath's reputation, however, started in the eighties of the nineteenth Century with the publication of a number of his poetical works.⁵⁸ In Bengali, there are 28 large volumes consisting of poetry, dreams, operas, short stories, novels and essays and a similar number of volumes of letters. Besides he wrote merely 2500 Songs and drew over 2000 painting. He once said in Germany, "My poetry is for my countrymen".⁵⁹

The expedition of his poetic life is amazing. Not less surprising are the variety and the beauty of the literary forms. Rabindranath composed his first poem at age eight and by the end of his life, had writhen ever twenty-five volumes of poetry.⁶⁰ His first signed poem, *Hindu Melar uphar*, was read in the *Hindu Mela* of 1875, the poem is composed in imitation of Hemachandra's *Bharat Sangit*, and these poems comprise the nebulae of his poetic career, having little touch with reality. The first three years of his poetic career may be

⁵⁶ <http://www.comwritesspirit.net/spiritualpoets/RabindranathTagorepoetry>.

⁵⁷ **Granthana**, Indian J.of Library Studies, Raja Ram mohan Roy Librarian Formulation, Vol.ix-N, 1&2,2002,p.12.

⁵⁸ Mohit Ray. K: *Studies on Rabindranath Tagore*, volume, 1 Atlantic Published Distributors New Delhi, 2004.p.1.

⁵⁹ <http://rPo.library.utoronto.ca/poet/389.html>

⁶⁰ O'Connell's, Kathleen: *Rabindranath Tagore the Poet as Educator*, Calcutta, Visva Bharti, 2002, p.3.

called the child period or 'The beginning'. It covers the period from 1878 to 1881.

The adolescent poet first entered into his real self when in 1871 he abandoned the traditional versification and instead of chasing after the illusive romantic tales composed *Bhānu Simha Thākur Padābali* in the manner of 'Brajabuli' of *Vaishanav padābal*. From 1882 to 1886, was the when in fact, that the real development of his poetic career started *Sandhyā Sangit* (Evening Song, 1882) *Prabhat Sangit* (Morning Song, 1883), *Chabi o Gam* (Picture and Songs, 1884), *Bhānu Simha Thakur Padābali*, 1884) and *kadi O Kamal* (sharp and Flat, 1886) belong to this period. It is practically impossible to summarise the achievement of a prolific poet like Rabindranath (1861-1941), whose entire career, right from the age of twelve to the age of eighty when he died was one continuous cealen harvest of literary compositions. He is as much versatile, as he is profound. No other poet -Vyas, Valmiki, Homer, Shelley, Keats, Heine or Goethe is comparable with him. There is same similarity between Goethe, and Rabindranath in the nature of poetic talent and the philosophy of life, but all things considered Rabindranath is simply matchless.⁶¹

1. His Universality:

Tagore was a great Indian who embodied in himself the image of a universal man. His works have a definite touch of universality. Richard Church thus writes on Tagore. "He was a unified man, a whole man and as such was an example to his country and a missionary to the West. "When our lords and leaders pass into oblivion, Tagore will continue to enchant us by his music and poetry for though he is an Indian. He has added to the sweetness of life, to the stature of civilization."

⁶¹ Ray. K. Mohit: *Studies on Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol.1 Atlantic Publisher & Distributors New Delhi, 2004, pp.7, 8.

2. Poet of Love:

Love to Tagore is not merely an emotional outburst and is also not an outflow of libido. To him it is an irresistible spiritual urge. It is the call of the soul, which cannot be denied. Love constitutes a major theme in his poetry. He interprets the love of mother, of father, of son, of husband, of wife, of lover, of beloved and of friend. Tagore's love-poetry shows the influence of Vaishnava love poetry which centers round the love of Radha and Krishna.⁶² Love is undoubtedly one of the most important themes of Tagore's poetry.⁶³

3. Nature-Poet:

Rabindranath always felt inspired by the varied and myriad forms of natural beauty. He himself professed, "In our blood we feel a relationship with the ever-new green, juicy grass, creepers, trees, bush, stream wind, light and shade, the cycle of the seasons, the eternal movement in the sky of planets and stars, the varied earthly life."⁶⁴ He shares with Wordsworth a love of Nature, which love one can see in Indian poetry too whether of *Valmiki* or *Kalidasa*. But in his writing the personality of the poet becomes the medium of expression as in Wordsworth or Shelley.⁶⁵ Wordsworth believed that there was a natural sympathy between men and nature. The philosophical background of the theory is that both nature and man being manifestations of God, are capable of finding themselves in a union of joy. But unlike Wordsworth Tagore is a poet both of a pleasant and soft nature and also of nature in its harsh, unpleasant and ugly moods. He opines, "East and West have met in Rabindranath's attitude nature -----Eastern vision and Western hedonism have given a special turn to his love of nature -----he has at once enjoyed nature as a separate existence and realized it by setting it properly in the stream of

⁶² K.K: *New Standard Studies in English Literature*, Snjana Prakashan Mandir, 2004. pp.129-130.

⁶³ Ayyub Sayeed Abu: *Tagore Quest*, Published Papyrus Ganendra Mitra Calcutta, 1980, p.31.

⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 130-131.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.113. (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges Of Today*.)

universal existence. Neither aspect is in his opinion inferior to the other. This individual outlook is the differential of Rabindranath among poets".⁶⁶

Imagery and Symbolism in Tagore's poetry:

Imagery is the most important single item in poetry; it is more impotent in mystical poetry than in other poetry. Tagore's imagery comes from the ways, customs and culture of medieval feudal life, which had lingered on, particularly in Bengal, long enough for Tagore to have got more than a glimpse of them. Tagore draws much of his imagery from his legacy of mythical and doctrinal lore of Hinduism. This is a pervasive element. Tagore's imagery is drawn is that of the cultural in which he breathed and in which music and theatricals were the dominant elements. Tagore's imagery is not ground in earthly things but draws inspiration from cosmic entities, and in the formation of it, perception and imagination have as much a role as conception and inspired faith.⁶⁷

The Jivan Devta Image:

The concept of the *Jivan-Devata* is present in his poetry from beginning to the end. This *Jivan-Devata* is the Lord of the poet's life leading him, despite all obstacles, towards the fulfillment of his Innermost yearning. He is a part of the poet's self an apotheosis of his inner spirit. He is the Lord of the poet's soul, but also its lover. The *Jivan-Devata* is not only the Lord of the poet's life, he is also the Lord of the universe.

Romantic, Sensuous and Picturesque Imagery:

Tagore's imagery is largely romantic, sensuous and picturesque. Romantic feelings are beautifully expressed through equally romantic images which are polished, suggestive and picturesque. The following lines from one of his early poem contain a romantic image of surpassing beauty:

⁶⁶ Ibid. p.131. (*K.K. New Standard Studies*)

⁶⁷ Sharma T.R.: *Essays on Rabindranath Tagore*, Publication vimal Prakashan, Ram Nagar, Gaziabad, 1987, pp. 120-122.

"I clasp both thin hands in mine. And keep thine eyes prisoner with my hungry eyes Seeking and crying, where art Thou where, O where As in the solitary star of the dark evening sky Quivers the light of heaven with its immense mystery, In thin eyes, in the depth of their darkness There shines a soul beam tremulous with a wide mystery."

Tagore's love poem in 'Lover Gift'. 'The Garden' and 'Fruit Gathering' are redolent of romanticism and are also erotic. Even in 'Gitanjali' erotic images are found.

Nature – Objects as Symbols of Human Emotions:

Tagore's poetry does not lack in sublimity and depth of thought. It has richness of diction and imagery and yet this is his uniqueness'. It has the open-air atmosphere of a folk song. There are constant references in it to common things of Nature and to common people flowers, the fruits, rivers and ferries, clouds and rains, the sky and the stars, the boatman and the beggars, travelers on the road and shepherd with their flutes. These common objects of Nature provide Tagore with his imagery.

The Flower:

Flower imagery also recurs in Tagore's poetry. The flower symbolises the fulfilment of human longing for God. The bud blooms into flower and the flower finds its fulfilment in fruit. Images come from Tagore's pen as do sparks out of chimney fire. His images are colourful, highly sensuous and ordinary objects and phenomena of nature and yet they enable Tagore to communicate highly abstract truths to his readers.⁶⁸ These commonplace images create a deceptive impression of simplicity; in this way Tagore achieves a rare union of simplicity and sublimity.

⁶⁸ K.K: *New Stander Studies in English Literature*, Ajanta Prakashan Mandir, Agra, 2004. pp.131-134.

Poetical Works:

Rabindranath seems to have been a master of all forms, lyrical, narrative or heroic. But the major portion of his work is lyrical and everything he wrote, even his prose, bears the impress of strong personal feeling and the musical abandon of his lyric expression.⁶⁹ Tagore's works were of intransient significance for the contemporary Indian poets. Tagore introduced, a spirit of high national awareness into Indian literature and through his works helped to produce new artistic trends and aesthetic norms. Like the new poets, Tagore was a rebel.⁷⁰

(1882) *Sandhya Sangit* (Evening Songs):

In the collected works of Rabindranath, the first book is *Sandhya Sangit*, (Evening Songs). About the poems of this book Rabindranath himself said that the pain and sadness, which sought expression in them was the expression of the struggle of his submerged innerself to free itself from complexities and come out into the open. The keynote of *Sandhya Sangit* is the unhappiness of an imperfect adjustment with the world and nature, which Rabindranath started feeling at a very tender age, when he was merely child.

Prabhat Sangit (1883):

The next book of verse, which Rabindranath wrote was the *Prabhat Sangit* or the "Morning Song".⁷¹ In this book he had called out to nature and humanity.⁷²

⁶⁹ Sati Ghose: *Rabindranath*, Published book land Private limited. Sankar Ghose Lane Calcutta-6 1996, p. 78

⁷⁰ Sharma T.R.: *Essays on Rabindranath Tagore*, Publisher's vimal Prakashan, 1987, pp. 209-210.

⁷¹ Sati Ghose: *Rabindranath*, Published book land Private limited. Sankara Ghose lane Calcutta-6 1996, pp. 78-79.

⁷² www.cabinetorg, calcuttalibrarynetwork, cabinet.

Manasi “Dream of Love”(1890):

Manasi published in December 1890 is the first book of verse, which bears the stamp genius. Mansi is a quest of the perfection of love and of the perfect object to love.⁷³

Sonar Tari (Golden Boat) 1894:

Sonar Tari is the next book of verse after Mansi. When this book was written Rabindranath had reached full manhood. Sonar Tari (Golden Boat, 1894), may be taken as symbol of the poetic career of Rabindranath. In it the charm and sweetness of nature mingle with the poetic mind. We can find in this book full-fledged expression.

Citra (The Variegated) (1896):

Published in 1896 is the product of Rabindranath’s most matured mind, one of the best poetical works in Bengali literature and certainly a masterpiece of world literature. It contains some of the finest poem of Rabindranath. In it his theories of ideal beauty and ‘*Jeevan Debata*’ are reconciled into a perfect whole.⁷⁴ In this book we find his mysticism in a fully developed form the faint glimmering of which flit across our mind in the “Golden Boat”.

Kalpana (1900):

Kalpana period may be considered as Tagore’s dark night of the soul before he emerged into the morning light of *Gitanjali*. The best poem of *Kalpana* and the most appealing songs of that period express spirit darkness fatigue and despair.

⁷³Ibid. p.31.(*Tagore Quest*, 1980.)

⁷⁴ Roy K. Mohit: *Studies on Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol.1. Atlantic Publisher & Distributor, New Delhi, 2004, pp.12-13.

Naivedya:

This is the book of verse and rightly dedicated to his father. It was his last book in which he made poetry out of imbibed religious experience or rather ideas *Naivedya* is dominated by ideas.⁷⁵

Gitanjali (Songs Offering):

Gitanjali was described on its first appearance in English as 'Songs offering'. The pieces included in it were prose rendering of a selection of poems from the Bengali *Gitanjali*, *Naivedya*, *Kheya*, *Gitismalya* – tell- tale tilles all.⁷⁶ Tagore's Bangala Songs which were later on rendered into English and published in the form of *Gitanjali* were composed in the first decade of this century. This decade had a saddening effect on Tagore's life as it had brought five deaths in the poet's family viz that of his wife in 1902-second daughter in 1903, eldest daughter in 1907 and of his youngest son in 1907. It is this sadness that finds projection in his compositions. These incidents very much effected of his life.⁷⁷

Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali* has held a special pride of place in the hearts of all Indians. This slim volume of songs –offerings catapulted India on to the literary map of the world. It has been translated into almost all Indian languages. *Gitanjali* (Songs Offering) was first published by the India Society London, on November, 1912. The next edition published by Macmillan and Company, London in March, 1913 was reprinted ten times before the award of the Noble prize on 13 November, 1913. It was William Rotheustein who first read Tagore's manuscript. The poems delighted him. He contacted Yeats and introduced Tagore to authors, poets, painters and thinkers of the West. He also arranged for the publication of the book by the Indian society.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 46 (*Tagore Quest*, 1980.)

⁷⁶ K.R. Srinivas Iyengar: *Rabindranath Tagore*, Popular Prakashan Bombay, 1965, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 84. (*Essays On Rabindranath Tagore*.)

⁷⁸ Rabindranath Tagore: *Gitanjali (Songs Offering)* USBPD Publishers, Distributor Pvt. Ltd 5 Ansari Road, New Delhi, 2003.pp.1, 259.

There are 103 poems in the English *Gitanjali*, but only 53 of these poems have been taken from the Bengali originate. The others poems, translated into English, included 16 from Gitimaliya, 3 from shishu, 1 from chaitali, 1 from Kalpana, 1 from Litsarga, 1 from Samarn and 1 from Tagore's symbolic drama *Achalayatan*. The *Gitanjali* songs have become world of famous. *Gitanjali* brings the poet into closer and more familiar contact with the natural world than any previous book. The book's mood is gray, its key is almost minor, its pictures mournful, or, at best by exhilaration. Almost every line of *Gitanjali* is crammed with natural things.⁷⁹

The peculiar glory of *Gitanjali* is that in it the vision of God and hunger for the infinite are in touch with human life, do not scorn the passions and affections of the heart, and are full of a heavenly tenderness for the limitations of life.⁸⁰ In Tagore's *Gitanjali* there is only one current, the poet is speaking directly to us. He is not expressing another's attitude and feeling but his and only his.⁸¹ Men and women of Bengal felt doubly proud of Tagore, for they know the real poet, Rabindranath, who song to them in their own mother Tongue.⁸²

The poems of *Gitanjali* have been compared to the work of almost all the living or dead poet on earth, from Sappho to T.S.Elit. Such as Francis Thomson, Wordsworth, patmore, Tennyson, Walt Whitman, Traherne, and Herbert Vaughan etc.⁸³ There are some selected poems from the *Gitanjali*.

- (i) *"Thou has made me endless, such is the pleasure.
This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again,
and fillets it ever with fresh life.
This little flute of a reed thou has carried over*

⁷⁹ Thomson Edward: *Rabindranath Tagore, Poets Dramatist*, Oxford University Press London New York, Bombay, 1926, pp. 226.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp.142-143. (*Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*)

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 68. (*Tagore Quest*)

⁸² Stephen. N.Hay: *Asian Ideas of East and West*, Harward University, Cambridge Massachusetts, Bombay: Oxford Press, 1970, p.307

⁸³ Dr. Aranson A.M.A.: *Rabindranath Tagore Through The Western Eyes*, Published Kitabistan Allahbad, 1943, p.107.

*hills and dales and hast breathed through it
melodies eternally new.*

*At the immortal touch of they hands my title
heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to
utterance ineffable.*

*Thy infinite gifts came to me only on these
very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and
still thou poorest, and still there are room to
fill."*

(I) Reference to the Context:

These lines have been selected from poem no.1 of *Gitanjali* composed by Rabindranath Tagore. In this poem he shows the inner most essence of his views of life.

Explanation:

The poet says to us the meaning and value of life in a beautiful and convincing manner, how the soul is immortal and is dowered by God with many lives to make is gather experience, became fitter for union with Him, and rise from partial perception and realisation of love and beauty in the universe to rejoicing for ever in His infinit beauty and love.⁸⁴

(ii) *The child who is decked with prince's robes and
Jeweled chains round his neck loses all
Pleasures in his play, his dress hampers him at every step
In fear that it may be frayed or stained with dust
he keeps himself off the world, and is afraid even to move*

(II) Reference to the context:

These lines have been selected from poem No. VIII of '*Gitanjali*' composed by Rabindranath Tagore. In this lyric the theme of the foregoing

⁸⁴ S.R.Bakshi: *Rabindranath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*, Om Publication, 2001, p. 150.

lyric is continued and there is direct condemnation of worldly wealth, power and pelf.

Explanation:

The poet says that the child is wearing fine clothes and decorated with ornaments, is deprived of his freedom and joy. He does not feel free. He can neither play freely nor can he enjoy the company of his fellowmen. His dress creates obstacle in his way of enjoying his life. He fears lest he should spoil his fine clothes. He is so much worried of his clothes that he keeps himself off from people and is even afraid of moving freely.

- (iii) *O Fool to try to carry thyself upon thy own shoulders!
O beggar, to come to beg at thy own door!
Leave all thy burdens on his hands, who can,
and never look being in regret.*

(III) References to the context:

These lines have been taken from poem Nov. 9th of 'Gitanjali' composed by Rabindranath Tagore. The poet exhorts his readers to place themselves in the hands of God. They should have complete faith in divine wisdom, love and charity.

Explanation:

The poet says that it would be foolish on our part to carry the burdens of cares and worries of life on our shoulders. To try to carry the burden of our own life is as foolish as to come back and knock at our own door. God bears the burden of the whole universe. We should also place ourselves in his hands. He can solve our problems. He will do the best for us. We should be hopeful about our future. We should not look to the past with sorrow and grief.

- (iv) *The sleep that flits on baby's eyes –does any body know
From where it comes? Yes, there is a rumour –
that it has its dwelling where, in the fairy village*

*among shadows of the forest dimly lit with glow
Worms, there hang two limited bands of enchantment
from there it comes to kiss baby's eyes.*

(IV) References to the Context:

These lines have been selected from the poem No. LXI of 'Gitanjali' composed by Rabindranath Tagore. In these lines the poet gives us a details description of various aspects of a baby's life. The poet says that a baby's sleep and smile have their origin in the enchanted fairy land.

Explanation:

The sleep says, Tagore, that hangs over a baby's eyes in no ordinary sleep. It is a magic sleep that comes from two magic buds blooming in same enchanted fairy island which is lit with glow worms. This sleep stands in contrast with the sleep of the grown ups who are tortured, tormented and harassed by their sordid activities and greedy habits even in their slumber. As children are yet unacquainted with life, they are spotlessly pure and unspoiled and have a feeling of wonder and this purity are well reflected upon their innocent visages when they are lost in the enjoyment of sweet sleep.⁸⁵

(I) Sandhya Sangit (offering songs):

Poem – *Suicide of a Star*. This is a poem in the *Sandhya Sangit* called the "suicide of a star".

Reference to the context:

According to Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay this poem refers to a first suicide attempt Kadambari is supposed to have made in 1880. The poem reflects no more than a generalised mood of youthful romantic agony. The poem is more likely to have been written at Chandernagore when Tagore was

⁸⁵ K.K: *New Standard Studies in English Literature*, Ajanta Prakashan Mandir, Agra, 2004, pp.125-126, 128-129.

holidaying with Jyotrindra Nath and Kadambari. The young Rabindranath expresses his romantic pessimism in his poem "The suicide of a star" Thus: ⁸⁶

*"From the shining bank
Into the dark sea,
A star jumped like one mad,
And all the other stars around
Looked on --- as if stemmed."
He did kill himself
And sank deep into the sea
with all bright light, extinguished'
To the place he reached
Where hundreds of stars
In ashes lay dead."
What had happened to him
And why he did so
Why he gave up life
None cared to know.
No loss was there
To all, was the same?
All stars shine as ever
Without a shadow of pain!
Gone! Gave! A star is given!
Into the oblivion it sank,
Into the sea of dark!
In the deep night,
In the sky infinite!
My heart! do you desire!
To fall in eternal sleep*

⁸⁶ Ketaki kushari Dyson: *Rabindranath Tagore, I won't Let You Go Selected Poems*, USBPD, 5-Ansari Road, Published, New Delhi, 1992, p.238.

By the side of that star.

Into the dark sea,

Into that deep night

Into the sky infinite!

The poem says that a star, though it looked bright and happy, was miserable in the heart of hearts. It actually got tired of its dreary life and destroyed itself. But the impervious world went on in its usual way as if nothing had happened. Nothing was lost in the world; no one felt the loss of the star.⁸⁷

Prabhat Sangit (Morning Song):

Reference to the context – In this book there is a poem called the “*Nirijharer Swapna Bhanga*” (“The Awakening of the Brook”) wills several the feeling of the poet. Some lines quoted from “*Nirijhare Swapna Bhanga*”.

“How this day

At down, so early,

The sun beam kisses

The is heart, melancholy,

How does the song?

Of the merry bird, joyful,

Enter into the cane,

Dreary and dismal

After so many day

And after so long

The heart awakes from sleep,

And a weary dream

Then in gushing torrents

Do bubble end

⁸⁷ Sati Ghose: *Rabindranath*, Publisher Book Land Private Limited, 1966,p.79.

*All vain desires and
 Vain emotions aspen
 The mountain quinces
 Vain emotions aspen
 The mountain quinces
 And massive stares roll by,
 The foams rise high
 Furiously angry,
 Like mad,
 The water whishes
 Round and rounded
 To break through the person
 And come out free.*

The poem, Awakening of the waterfall (*Nirijharer Svapanbhanga*) was taken from the popular anthology of Rabindranath in Bengali *Sanchata*.⁸⁸

Meaning:

In this poem the poet describes his heart like a stream gushing out into light from the deep darkness of a cave. The darkness of the cavern which the stream broke through was the darkness of his own heart, and the suffering from this oppressing darkness.

Manashi ("Dream Love"):

The prayer of Surdas (*Surdaser Prarthana*) is a significant poem in Manashi, in which this attitude has full expression and this attitude marks the dawn of the mystic query in the poet's mind.

Meaning:

In the "*prayer of Surdas*", Surdas entreats his beloved to blind his eyes with a knife for the eyes with which he had looked at her face were blemished

⁸⁸ Jadu Shah: *The Flute Selected Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*, Publication Shipra Delhi, 2003, p. 41.

with intense desire, which in all sense was “physical”. In this poem Rabindranath has turned his eyes from the beauties of the external world, and has placed them in the midst of his soul. His enjoyment of beauty has gone much beyond physical limitations and has reached the level of spiritual realisation.⁸⁹

(I) Sonar Tari (The Golden Boat):

Reference to the context:

The First poem of the book, “*Sonar Tari*” also titled the same. The poem was written in mid- *Kartik* end of October. As poem *sonar Tari* The “Golden Boat” is an excellent example of Rabindranath Tagore’s artistry. The resembling clouds, endless rain, fiercely flowing swollen river, the farmers busy in harvesting the paddy. Boats filled with shaver piled high, trees like – ink smears on the far bank all of these create a natural unexpressed restlessness in the mind.⁹⁰ There are some lines of the Golden Boat quelled here.

Clouds rumbling in the sky: teeming rain
I sit on the riverbank sad and alone
The sheaves lie gathered, harvest has ended.
Thee river is swollen and fierce in its flow.
As we end the paddy it started to rain
No room, no room, the boat is too mall
Loaded with my gold paddy, the boat in full
A crass the rain – sky clouds heave to and go
On the bare river, banks, I remain alone
What had has given: the golden boat took all.

⁸⁹, Sati Ghose: *Rabindranath*, Publisher Book Land Private Limited, Shankar Ghose Lane, Calcutta-6, 1966, pp. 81-82.

⁹⁰ Rabindranath Tagore, The Golden Boat – Poetry on All sprit / www.all sprit co. 4 tack.html. p 1.

In this poem we find the picture of a peasant, harvesting alone in his small field. The field is on the margin of a river and on the other bank, glimpses of Village, hazy through the morning mist, come to the vision. While the peasant is reaping corn, a man comes in a golden boat and takes away all the ripe, golden paddy, cut afresh. When the peasant entreats the boatman to take him along also, he only smiles and goes away. The peasant is left alone on the bank of the river under a sky grim with heavy rain-clouds. Many critics have identified the "Boatman of the golden boat with the Jivan Devta" of Rabindranath Tagore. On this opinion that the poet says he felt that he knew the Boatman but could not recognise him fully.⁹¹

Chitra ("Many Colours")

Farewell to Heaven:

Reference to the context:

In this poem Tagore's rejection of mythical heavenly worlds and his firm commitment to the earth are put into the mouth of a hero who had earned a temporary Sojourn in Indra's heaven, whose term in heaven is now over and who must now return to the earth we quote it below some lines.⁹²

(Farewell to Heaven)

*Now fades the garland of menders round my neck
O great Indra, and the radiant mark in quenched
On my sullied forehead. My piety's strength
Wanes. And gods, goddesses, today I must
Say good-bye to human. Gladly have I spent?
Many millennia in the king dross of the gods
As one of the immortals, and hoped to see
At this parting. Hour hint of tears*

⁹¹ Sati Ghose: *Rabindranath*, Publisher Book Land Private Limited, Shankar Ghose Lane, Calcutta-6, 1966, p.83.

⁹² Ibid. pp.240. (*Rabindranath Tagore, I won't Let You Go. Selected Poems.*)

*In heaviness's eyes. But heartless, void of grief
Indifferent, this happy celestial land
Just look on.*

*Sometimes, gods, I shall remember this heaven
like a far –off dream, when half –way through the night
Waking suddenly from sleep, I 'll see the moon
Flooding the while bed, and my love fast asleep.
Slack arm lying likely, sere disheveled,
Shyness forgotten until round by my soft
Amorous basses, she will, startled, fold me
Fast in her arms, twine around my chest.
At the sound wind wafts flower, scent, and wide awake,
A poet calls from a distant branch.....*

In this poem, "Farewell to Heaven" the poet's heart is crying for the 'indigent afflicted, tearful, sullied' Mother Earth. The heaven is in his imagination separate and detached from the Creation. The joys and sorrows of the Earth or the loss of one or many humans do not affect the fare of happiness of the gods. Man cannot be satisfied with a monotonous life of unbroken happiness. He becomes restless for a varied and greater life on earth. Happiness may be short lived and peace may be rare here but man's fulfillment can only be found on this earth.⁹³ The farewell to heaven is a *Jivan Devta* poem only in the sense that their thoughts stratum is that out of which the true *Jivan Devta* poems after rise.

Kadi O Kamal:

Poem – Breast:

Reference to the context:

This poem written when he first goes to know her intimately. This was probably in the post rains of 1885 at Sholapur.

⁹³ Ibid. pp.9-10. (*The Flute Selected Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*)

*Truly, we have the scares summer here
That Golden Mountain, dalliance –land of gods
The light breasts of this virtuous lady light
With rays of b heaven the earth, man's mortem, lot
From there the infant sun rises at down
And there in the evening, exhausted, he sinks
At night a dirty's irises keep watch
On two secluded unpolluted peaks
A nectar – flow from love's perennial source.*

Tagore, poetry is born out of an amalgam of the rich classical heritage of ancient India, the spacious way of the Mughal Court, the simple varieties of the life of common people of Bengal and the restless energy and intellectual vigour of modern Europe. He is an inheritor of all times and all culture. It is this combination of many different strands and themes that gives to his poetry. It resilience, Universality and infinite appeal.⁹⁴ So we can say that, Tagore's poetry created the cult of the human being. His experience has helped the new poets understand the need to search for new poetics and new interpretation of ancient mythology. He was the first Indian who attempted to eradicate these contradictions by building a bridge between Oriental and Western cultures.

Selected Works:

KABIKAHINI, 1878- A Poet's Tale

SANDHYA SANGEET, 1882-Evening Songs

PRABHAT SANGEET, 1883-Morning Songs

BAU-THAKURANIR HAT, 1883

RAJASHI, 1887

RAJA O RANI, 1889- The King and the Queen/Devouring Love

VISARGAN, 1890-Sacrifice

⁹⁴. Humayun Kabir: *Poems of Rabindranath Tagore*, UBSPD Publisher & Distributer Pvt Ltd, 2005, p. xxxii.

MANASI, 1890

IUROPE-JATRIR DIARI, 1891,1893

VALMIKI PRATIBHA, 1893

SONAR TARI, 1894- The Golden Boat

KHANIKA, 1900- Moments

KATHA,1900

KALPANA,1900

NAIVEDYA,1901

NASHTANIR, 1901- The Broken Nest

SHARAN, 1902

BINODINI,1902

CHOCHER BALI,1903-Eyesore

NAUKADUBI,1905-Haaksirikko

KHEYA,1906

NAUKADUBI,1906-The Wreck

GORA,1907-09-suom

SARADOTSAVA,1908-Autumn Festival

GALPAGUCCHA,1912- A Bunch of Stories

CHINNAPATRA,1912

VIDAY-ABHISAP,1912- The Curse at Farewell

GITANJALI,1912- Song Offerings (new translation in 2000 by Joen

Winter, publ. Anvil Press)-Uhrilauluja

JIBAN SMRTI, 1912- My Reminiscenes- Elamani muistoja,trans.by J.Hollo

DAKGHAR,1912-Post Office

The Crescent Moon,1913

Glimpses of Bengal Life,1913

The Hungry Stones and Other Stories,1913

CHITRA,1914-transl.

GHITIMALAYA,1914

The King of the Dark Chamber,1914

The Post Office, 1914

Sadhana, 1914

GHARE-BAIRE, 1916- The Home and the World-Koti ja maailma

BALAKA, 1916-A Flight of Swans

CHAUURANGA, 1916-transl.

Fruit Gathering, 1916

The Hungry Stones, 1916

Stray Birds, 1916

PERSONALITY, 1917-Persoonallisuus

The Cycle of Spring, 1917

My Reminiscence, 1917

Nationalism, 1917

Mashi and Others Stories, 1918

Stories from Tagore, 1918

Palataka, 1918

JAPAN-jA TRI, 1919- A Visit to Japan

Greater India, 1921

The Fugitive, 1921

Creative Unity, 1921

LIPIKA, 1922

MUKTADHARA, 1922-trans.

Poems, 1923

Goa, 1924

Letters from Abroad, 1924

Red Oleander, 1924

GRIHAPRABESH, 1925

Broken Ties and Other Stories, 1925

Rabindranath Tagore: Twenty-Two Poems, 1925

RAKTA-KARABI, 1925-Red Oleanders

DADHANA, 1926-suom.

NATIR PUJA, 1926-transl.

Letters to a Friend, 1928

SESHER KAVITA, 1929- Farewell, My Friend

MAHUA, 1929-The Herald of Spring

JATRI, 1929

YAGAYOG, 1929

The Religion of Man, 1930

The Child, 1931

RASHIAR CHITHI, 1931-Letters from Russia

PATRAPUT, 1932

PUNASCHA, 1932

Mahatma and the Depressed Humanity, 1932

The Golden Boat, 1932

Sheaves, Poems and Songs, 1932

DUI BON, 1933-Two Sisters

CHANDALIKA, 1933

Letters of Rabindranath Tagore:

Rabindranath Tagore being a social reformer had done lot for the masses. But he was basically a poet at heart. Besides writing poems, he has also written many letters on various occasions. Through the letters can easily undusted his poetic and saintly personality. Tagore's letters are full of beauty and charm.

Some of the letters tell us about the themes that Rabindranath wanted to talk about his international tours, and sometimes express his frustration at not being heard.⁹⁵

The letters of Rabindranath Tagore which have so far been published in book form comprise eleven volumes. His best letters are admittedly his 'Torn

⁹⁵ Krishna Dutt and Andrew Robinson: *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. xviii.

letters' (*Chinnapatra*) written between 1885 and 1895. He is *like* who sits at an open window, looking out on the passing show of life in front of him. But, as he says in a letter, one must have a genuine love for the spectacle before him, for then only can he write of the procession of events 'in words that sail and dance in the air with light wings outspread'. It must be remembered that Rabindranath wrote no finer prose than is to be found in *Chinnapatra*, which means, therefore, that Bengali prose reaches its highest watermark in them.

Intimate relation with Mother Nature:

The *padma* becomes for him a living being; river he sees her sometimes as a wild and wayward women madly dancing and shattering everything that comes in her way; at other times she in to him a pale, fair slip of a girl with grace in every movement of her slender body. The evening star is to him as one long known and loved, and when he opens his eyes at dawn to see the morning star smiling down on him, he feels that a radiant and vigilant love has kept watch over him as he slept.

In one of the letters from Shelidah dated 27 June 1894, he says the happy thought has suddenly come into his head that instead of trying to improve the world and failing, he might set himself to accomplishing what he can do, namely write stories. Many of the letters, again, bring out one leading Characteristic of this earlier stories- the fusion in his mind of his characters with their environment. To see a great writer giving shape to an idea two different media at about the same time is a fascinating experience, for it seems to given us a glimpse of the very process of literary creation.

There is one other point with this collection of the finest letters that Rabindranath ever wrote; his humour, which irradiates a large part of this delightfull correspondence as it does so many of his other prose writings. His humour contradicts the opinion of an eminent European philosopher that laughter and sympathy are incompatible. Rabindranath wrote during a long life, there are few that excel them in beauty of the thought and language few that

can be read so often with undiminished pleasures and with increasing interest in the mind which they mirror – a mind of rare loftiness and brilliance steeped a quite joy in nature and a deep inner peace, and yet keenly alive to every aspect of the world of men and the world of Art.

The sixth volume of Rabindranath's correspondence, published by Visva-Bharti in May 1957, contains thirty-six letters to his great friend Jagadishchandra Bose and seven to his friend's wife Abala. The majority of these letters were written in the early years of the present century when neither the poet nor the scientist had achieved world recognition.

The poet's loyalty, his interest and whole hearted support must have sustained the great scientist in the struggle for the establishment of the truth of his discoveries in England in the teeth of jealousy, suspicion and hostility, open and covert. How much greater than himself he considers his friend to be, and how ardently he looks forward to the day when India's valuable contribution to the store of scientific knowledge through jagadishchandra will be gratefully acknowledged by the world! In his letter dated 17 September 1900, he writes from Shelidah.

When you return victorious we in Bengal will enjoy a share of your triumph. We need not understand what you have achieved, nor need we spend much thought or money or time over it; we shall simply help ourselves to all the credit when *The Times* publishes words of praise from the lips of Englishmen. A prominent journal in our country will then point out that we also are men to reckon with, another will probably Proclaim that we are making one discovery after another in the realm of Science. No one bothers about you knows, but when you return home with your harvest of glory, we shall all claim you as our very own. For ploughing and sowing – you alone; for enjoying the fruits of your labour-why, every one of us! So you see we stand to gain much more than you, if you win victory.

Before passing on to a consideration of the letters in *path o pather prante*. A translation of a few lines from a letter to Jagadischandra (written in April 1902) to reveal Rabindranath's burning love for his mother land and for the simple Indian way of life and his distaste for any display of power and pomp.

India's far-stretching plains and her sky's wide expanse wait for that day with a yearning heart and out stretched arms... Whoever may rule over us, no one can snatch from us our sky, and our fields and meadows that extend to the horizon; or rob us of our right to knowledge or meditation or the spirit that spurns pomp and riches. In *path o pather* (On the Road and at the End of the Road) are collected together a number of letters which Rabindranath wrote to Mrs. Nirmal Kumar Mahalanobis. The letters in this volume, besides possessing high literacy value, have another interest in a marked degree; they give us very clear pictures of the poet's mind during his last years. He tells us about his outlook on life, his weaknesses and his qualities, his moods of happiness and depression with less reserve than else where. In one of the 'Torn letters' written in July 1893, he speaks of nursing a hopeless passion for 'that art called painting.' In a letter dated 7 Nov. 1928, he writes;

The principle news about me from day to day is that I am drawing pictures. Lines have spread their magic net over my entire mind... I have forgotten that I have at any time written poetry. However indistinctly, the thought of a poem suggests itself to the brain at the very beginning; and then like the Ganges rushing down from the malted locks of Shiva's hair through a chasm in the Himalayas, the poem comes cascading down the tip of the pen, and the rhythm begin to flow. But in the picture I try to draw, the method of composition is just the reverse of this. The first faint suggestions of lines came from the pen itself; then, as these lines began to assume familiar shapes, the brain starts to take cognizance of them.

In another letter, dated 28 Nov. 1928, he writes: -...The joy that pictures bring is the joy of definiteness; within restraint of lines we see the particular with distinctness -----

Many of the letters in this volume give us the poet's own evaluation of himself and his work. There is no end to the discussion in his mind as to what is his real nature. He feels certain that the poet – nature is not the whole of him ----- that to perceive beauty and to express it in beautiful words is not his sole function in life. Many other parts of his being call him to account. 'My vina has too many strings', he writes, 'and it is very difficult for all of them to be in perfect tune with each other'.-----

Sometimes, memories of his boyhood days come back to him with startling clearness, memories often tinged with a gentle sadness. While on a voyage to Japan in March 1929, he writes from his boat:

I was very lightly clad in a cotton upper garment and loose trousers for we were brought up like very poor children. Feeling cold, I went into a small room in a corner of the house, which we used to call *toshakhana*, where the servants lived. In the semi – darkness Jyotida's servants Chinte was toasting slices of bread on a toaster over a small Charcoal stove. Mingled with the delicious smell of buttered toast which filled the room was the song Chinte was singing and the comfortable warmth of the stove. Of himself in his prime he writes. "There was a deep *tapasya* behind my manifold activities of that time – I was, infect, a complete *sannyase* in my search for truth and in my endeavors to give shape to my ideals".

Such reminiscences and illuminating passages of self – evaluation occur in many of these letters. Rabindranath's best letters – and their number is not inconsiderable – are among the best in their kind in any literature. There are some another important letter, which stated on different aspects such as,

A very valuable letter by him to Mr. Frederick Bose who wrote to Tagore asking what methods were adopted by him to unfold the mental and

spiritual faculties of his pupils. We have the model before us in the tradition of our ancient forest schools ----- Having this ideal of a school in teaching my mind which should be a part of a worshipful life, hallowed with the memory of a pious life whose days were passed here in communion with God--- The first help that our boys get here on this path is from the cultivation of love of nature and sympathy with all living creatures -----.⁹⁶

I Natural Calamities (Poet):

(a). In one letter, dated June 1891 he describes a storm of the kind, which still wreaks terrible havoc in today's Bangladesh:

I had been setting out on the deck for more than a quarter of an hour when heavy clouds rose in the west. They came up black, tumbled and tattered with streaks of lined light showing through here and there-----

I allowed my thought to take part in this terrible revelry; they leap into the open like a pack of schoolboys scudding set free. When, however, I got had to shut up the window and my poetizing, and retire quietly into the darkness inside, like a caged bird.

(b) Natural Beauty:

Storm such as this were a comparative rarity. A completely typical scene by contrast, is captured in a letter dated July 1893:

The flow of village life is not too rapid, neither is it stamens, work and rest go together, hand in hand. The ferry crosses to and from, the passes – by with Umbrellas wend their way along the two Path.

II. Women are washing rice on split – bamboo trays that they dip in the water----

⁹⁶ Rabindranath Tagore: *Century Volume*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1961-1981, pp.163-171.

III Social Reform:

In another letter, Rabindranath speaks moving of the peasants and their plight:

I feel great tenderness for these peasant folk – our riots – big, helpless, infantile children of providence, who must have food brought to their very likes, or they are undone ----Whether the socialistic ideal of a more equal distribution of wealth is attainable, but if not, the dispensation of providence is indeed cruel and mans truly unfortunate creatures -----Only a utopian dream these social problems are hard indeed. Fate has allowed humanity such a pit fully meager covered, that in pulling it over one part of the world, another has to be left bare. In allaying our poverty we lose our wealth, and with this wealth what a world of grace and beauty and power is lost to us.

Shelidah laid his inner life-----

IV Spiritual aspect:

Shalidah laid his inner life. This he expresses with particular felicity in a letter of June 1894:

The fact is that here away from Calcutta, I live in my own inner world, where the clocks don't keep ordinary time where duration is measured only by the intensity of the feelings; ---Immeasurable and every moment infinite -- With this beginning, Tagore wrote several hundred short stories of many kinds. A large proportion of them deal with social issues both in rustier and urban settings --. Tagore's attitude to Indian nationalism.⁹⁷

Letter to great friend Thomson, Shantiniketan 24 Oct. 1936; highlight his impartial political thinking.

⁹⁷ Andre Robinson forward Satayjit Ray: *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*, Publication Rupa & Co, Calcutta, 1989, pp. 28-29.

I have great regard, connote a definite political group in the country and I do not want to be identified with any political grouping ----⁹⁸

Social & political thinker and above all a patriot.

Letter # 7: Rabindranath to Van Eden; Shantiniketan, Nov. 19, 1919.

He wrote a blunt and strightfordeard letter to an European condition of Europe.

Against – our arms and ammunition:

For I cannot leave India now when she is having her own share of suffering which has spread over all the continents of the earth. The machine guns and airship showering wholesale death are grimly Serious in a battlefield but out side it they have the vicious fascination of a leaver and ugly toy----It cannot be true that the chivalry of Europe has all long been a myth, but there must be a cause for such steadily growing impairment of her humanility. My heart is drawn to you, my friend, because I know that you are one of those in Europe whose noble mission it is to remove this cause at the root.⁹⁹

The poet's letter to Lord Chelmsford the viceroy, repudiating his kinghood in protest for jalian wallah bag mass killing. The letter was published in the sates man, June 3, 1919.

To show his anger and discontent to watch Britishers he rejected to accept the reward of king hood.

The time has come when badges of honor make our shame glaring in the in congruous context of the humiliation and I for my part, wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions are liable to suffer degrade action not fit for human beings. And these are the reasons, which have compelled me to ask your Excellency, with due reference and regard to relieve me of my title of

⁹⁸ Uma Das Gupta: *A Difficult Friendship*, Letter of Edward Thomson and Rabindranath Tagore, Oxford University Press, 1913-1940, p. 200.

⁹⁹ www.Parabass.com/rabindranath/a.. 10/19/2005,p.12 to 22.

knighthood, which I had the humors to accept from his Majesty the king at the hands of your predicators ----

(I) Jillian Wallah Bagh Incident: Tagore's letter dated 30th May 1919 to Lord Chelmsford, viceroy of India.

The enormity of the measures taken by the government in Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has with a rude shock revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convulsed governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions recent and remote. Conserving that such treatment has been meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless by a power which has the most terribly efficient organization for destruction of human lives, we must strongly arrest that it can claim no political expediency far moral justification -----

The time has come when badges of honor make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand shorn of all special distinction by the side of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings-----

(II) Letter to Mahatma Gandhi on non-cooperation movement:

Tagore's letter dated April 10, 1919 to Mahatma Gandhi, Shantiniketan.
Power in all its forms is irrational. It is like the horse that drags the carriage blindfolded ----

I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for horses and not for men led by impulses of the moment. Evil on one side naturally biggest evil on other, injustice leading to violence and insult to vengeance. Unfortunately such a force has already been started, and either through panic or through wrath our authorities have shown us their

clams whose sure effect is to drone some of us into the secret path of resentment and others into utter demoralization ----

We must know that normal conquest does not consist in success that failure does not deprive it of its dignity and worth. Those who believe in spiritual life know that to stand against wrong, which has over whelming material power behind it is victory itself; it is the victory of the active fault in the ideal in the loath of evident defeat ----- I have always felt and said in accordance that the great gift of freedom can never come to a people through charity. We must win it before we can own it.¹⁰⁰

In this way collection of letters cannot how ever, give a representative view of an authors work, especially in the case of person poetry is as important as Tagore is. The letters are inevitably more geared to prose than to poetry and to non-fiction while reader will find how he explained his inspirations and objectives it is one deliberative subject that the letters provide the greatest insight.

¹⁰⁰ Shakti Das Gupta: *Tagore Aslan Out look*, Navan Bharati, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 130-132.

Chapter - 4



Chapter IV

Art and Thought of Rabindranath Tagore

Aesthetic Approach of Rabindra Nath Tagore:

The word 'Aesthetic' is derived from the Greek word Aesthetic, (sense-perception) but it traditionally regarded as a branch of philosophy concerned with the under-standing of beauty and its manifestation in art and nature. There developed a tendency in 20th Century to treat it as an independent Science concerned with investigating the phenomena of arts and their place in human life. In the 20th Century, not only Western people but also their Oriental Indian counter- parts, all of a sudden in the complexity of nationalism of modern Society began to appreciate that art of beauty.

Indian thinkers as Rabindranath Tagore and Abanindranath Nath Tagore of Bengal-renaissance group, Aurobindo Ghosh and Dr. Ananada Coomaraswamy, who in contact with the foreign people on their visit to particular country tried to widen the understanding through the delicacy of beauty of the Oriental art. For a brief history of aesthetical studies, divide the 20th Century into three periods, as the word 'aesthetic' changed in its perspective during three different periods.

1. The Prewar concepts of aesthetics.
2. Aesthetical studies.
3. Post war aesthetical studies.

I. In the first period, aesthetics was treated as the study of one art or the other and its activity and theory. This was the period when aesthetic in India was treated as a theory of specially painting, sculpture, temple-architecture and poetry with the pioneer-works of many scholars. In the Theory of aesthetics, it used to be known as nationalist art.

II. During the second stage of its developments the word 'Aesthetic' was not only taken as the art of painting, sculpture and architecture but it began to be treated as the spiritual activity of the subject. As social structure changed into events after events, aesthetic in arts depicted events, conscious and unconscious physiological process, which supported the *Vedantic* aesthetics of India and its parallel reflections in Sanskrit literature of the classical period. The word *Śilpa* 10 and *Kalā*, vocational and avocational art began to be enumerated in the sense of aesthetic. Philosophically, the word *Ścchidaanand* is reproduced with the three word-cum, formula by Devendranath (father of Rabindranath Tagore) that is *Satyam*, *Sihvium*, and *Sundaram*.¹

Tagore's love for aesthetic made him to create new direction in his through-system. His aesthetic is based on the nature as well as on the dignity of man.

To under stand this very varied response must try to comprehend Tagore's personality to a much greater extent are normally needs to with an artist. This aesthetics and about his own paintings and his total relationship to Indian and western artistic traditions, in additions and the significance of his chosen amateur status he has very deep vision in the field of aesthetics.²

Aesthetic theory of Tagore is very well illustrated in his illuminating appreciation of Balmiki and Kalidas. In the vast epic of Balmiki. Tagore is the essential "humanness" or *rasa* informing the whole work. Rama is a great hero for Tagore not because he is a god came to earth for the redress of suffering humanity, but because he embodies in himself the highest human values. The Kumara sambhava of *Kalidasa* assumes new significance as the saga of an ideal Indian housewife, whose beauty of heart outshines her beauty of person; the former alone leading to the cherished goal while the latter is foredoomed to failure despite the assistance of the god of physical love. Tagore thus bridges

¹ Dr. Padma Sudhi: *Aesthetic Theories of India*, Vol, 1 Bhandakar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1983, p. IV, V and VI.

² Andre Robinson forward satayjit Ray: *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*, Rupa & Co Calcutta, 1089,p.50.

the gulf between the life-affirming and life-denying philosophies of ancient India, the one rankly materialistic and the other severely monastical. Tagore has strikingly shown how the aesthetic life of man is embedded in his total life, and how the internal standard is the best of the many standards by which it may be judged, and how the internal standards, when fully cultivated, helps in breaking down the walls between the morally good and the beautiful and the true.

Tagore, who inherited the best in ancient Sanskrit classics and later Bengali Vaisnavitent poetic tradition, tried to give aesthetics, which was at once Indian and universal. He was something of a revolutionary in his own way when he gave a new meaning altogether to the school-men's concepts of *Rasa* and *AlanKara* and invested them with new significance. "*Like ethics, aesthetics aim chiefly at influencing life,*" said Tagore. A creative writer that Tagore was, he could illustrate his points with homely and poetic metaphors; and the influence of his aesthetic is felt even in the works of great poet like Keevempa in other language (like Kannada) in remote provinces like Karnataka.³

Tagore's aesthetic vision was of the beautiful rather than of the sublime. Tagore certainly conceives aesthetic emotion as a form of knowledge—in some ways a more satisfactory form of knowledge than perception thought, for aesthetic experience deepens the awareness of specific objects to which it refers, and, more generally, heightens the awareness of all reality. 'Everything around is real, yet we do not see reality in its immediacy, in its purity. It is only in artistic creation that reality comes before our consciousness unveiled, and we see it face to face'. The identity of truth and beauty is a favourite theme with Tagore, and he is fond of quoting Keats well known line to that effect.

Tagore's way of looking at aesthetic emotion is also in contrast with traditional Indian views on the subject. It may be recalled that for the *rasavadin* the kinship of aesthetic experience with mystical experience did not imply that

³ Mahindra Kulasrestha: *Tagore Century Volume*, Dev Datt Shastri V.V. R. I, Press, Hoshiarpur, 1961, pp.37, 39, 46-47.

the former was accredited as a kind of knowledge, as the latter undoubtedly was. Tagore's view of aesthetic emotion are very close to European scholastic views. In particular, the eminent modern representative of scholastic aesthetic, Jacques Maritain, insists like Tagore that there is such a thing as 'Poetical knowledge, that it is 'knowledge through emotion, and that 'when we participate in the poet's emotion we do not participate in his feelings but in his spiritualized and international emotion, in his emotion which is can see by his poetry.⁴

His basic attitude is aesthetic because he sees man in his 'surplus; i.e. in his creative impulse to move beyond what is immediately given and express himself in newer and newer fashions. The entire Tagorean aesthetic can therefore be called a search for truth from the perspective of art. Tagore's view of art with a focus on the relation between human personality and aesthetic truth. Tagore views this relation basically from an aesthetic point of view. The aesthetic apprehension of reality forms the core of almost all his reflections on man and his world. V.S. Naravane has rightly pointed out; *Tagore does not introduce aesthetic into his world view in order to complete or systematise his ideas. He allows his deepest thoughts on metaphysical by his aesthetic approach, and even his specific aesthetic opinions. Aesthetic is this very foundation of his philosophy, not its coping stone.*

According to Tagore, the truth of this kind of awareness (aesthetic awareness) has an integral character. It emerges from an in between relational realm, of man and his world; it is revealed through an integration of man's being with the world. He is basically an artist. The truth of an aesthetic experience consists in an authentic presentation of the art-object, revealing a unity or harmony among its different co-ordinates *within the field of the artist's and/or the beholder's perception.*⁵ 'Rabindranath Tagore says when we talk of aesthetic in relation to arts we must know that it is not about beauty in its

⁴ Tagore: *A Century Volume: 1861-1961*, Sahitya Akademi New Delhi, pp. 85-86.

⁵ Bhudev Chaudhari, K.G. Subermanym: *Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today* Indian Institute of Advance study, 1988, pp. 56, 60.

ordinary meaning but in that deeper meaning which a poet has expressed in his utterance: truth is beauty, beauty truth. An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasing to the eye, and yet we call it perfect when we become deeply conscious of its reality.⁶

The aesthetic perception of a harmonious whole in an art-object is based upon aesthetic internationality. For Tagore, 'truth', 'beauty' and 'harmony' are interchangeable terms for the phenomena which occur in relation to the personal man. Aesthetic truth is basically communicable. Tagore's concept of true human becoming. The Universality of aesthetic judgments consists in a revelation of the uniqueness of man. As Tagore contended, our arts and literature represent the creative activity which is fundamental in man.⁷

The artist's personality, which is central to his work and imparts it solidity and permanence, is what differentiates art from science. Tagore repeatedly avers that it is personality of man that constitutes the real world and forms the centrifugal force of art. Tagore opines that as perfect truth can only be known through personality, so the artist is basically concerned with the world of personality. It is the realization of this reality, which gives birth to all arts and creative activities.⁸

When Rabindranath Tagore met Einstein, the latter is reported to have said—"I am more spiritual than you are". Aesthetic experience is spiritual experience in a sense that soul enjoys it, but spiritual is different than the enjoyment of soul in beautiful. No only scientist, any one who creates, physically mentally, spiritually anything which can be shared among human being as a experience of joy that can be categories as aesthetic experience. Because it generates generality.⁹ In this way we can say that Tagore indubitably offers us a fairly profound and elaborate aesthetic theory, though, he does not

⁶ Sisir Kumar Das: *The English Writing of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 3, Sahitya Akademi New Delhi, p. 582.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 65 & 69 (*Rabindra Nath Tagore and The Challenges of Today*. 1988).

⁸ Ibid. pp. 139-140, 143, 145. (*Essays on Rabindra Nath Tagore*, 1987).

⁹ Ibid. pp. 93, 108 & 140. (*Aesthetic Theories of India*. Vol.2.1988).

write about art and aesthetic theory. Much of the finest of the Indian and Western aesthetics has been retouched and modernised by him, and this he has concept of man's surplus emotions as the source of art, he evinces affinity with the inimitable English *Ramanli* (poet) **William Wordsworth**. His ideas are a landmark in the history of aesthetics. This is because; Tagore's aesthetic philosophy assimilates the best of Indian Western aesthetics.

Transition from Child Art to Mature Art:

The new methods of human evaluation and development of psychology have brought so many new issues before us. Child art is also one of such new developments. Only a few decades back this word came into existence. First of all Herbert Spencer, in his book on education, written between 1854-59 recognised the child as an artist, which was a revolutionary statement.¹⁰

It is said that Rabindranath's paintings belong to child work. As if you give a pen or pencil and a sketchbook to a child, he will draw by rubbing the pencil on the sketchbook and produce any shape or form without any consciousness. This production will define child art. Rabindranath also has no pre-idea about his pictures, methods and basic knowledge of drawing and paintings. He gradually learnt that is enough to him that the colours, pen, pencil that he uses, create paintings. He does not know what he creates. He says that whenever he intended to create something, he gathered some painting materials used and produced something. And this something (Painting) is to express, not to explain. It means, his condition is like a child artist who produces something but is unable to explain it. But his art is not child like because the artist knows that his activity is for any picture.¹¹

Rabindranath Tagore says about his art how he started painting in his life when he watched his nephew Abanindranath Tagore's activities of arts; encouraged him to draw some pictures on paper. The fountainhead of Tagore's

¹⁰ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing House Meerut, 2001, p. 71.

¹¹ Rattan Parimoo: *Rabindra Nath Tagore: Collection of Essays*, Lalit kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1989, p.38.

inspiration whether in poetry or in painting or in music or in any of the others arts, was the family environment in which he had been brought up. One of his elder brothers to whom he was mostly indebted for his artistic life, Jyotrinranath Tagore, was not only a distinguished writer but also a good painter as well. Two of his nephews, Gaganendranath Tagore and Abanindranath Tagore, became famous as painters. Like literature and music, the art of painting was also cultivated in the family, and Rabindranath developed a deep love for it, from his childhood.

It is also interesting to note how he started his career as a painter. As a conscious and conscientious artist of words, he always took pains to change and correct his first draft, sometimes considerably. The erasures and marks of corrections naturally appeared unpleasing to sight and he tried to remove this unpleasing look of the corrected manuscript by adding lines and curves to his marking turning them into beautiful patterns. Gradually, the beauty of these patterns began to attract him and to create in him a desire to draw even outside his manuscript.¹²

Various modes of signatures adopted by Rabindranath in his paintings are a useful clue to their chronology. The process adopted by him was "*First there is the hint of a line, then the lines become a form. The more pronounced the form becomes, the clearer becomes the picture in his conception. This creation of form is a source of endless wonders*". It is significant that when he began to paint, he did not start by following traditional mannerisms. There is only one head by him where seemingly he tried to delineate facial features in stylised outline like *Ajanta*. When he met the Austrian pioneer of child art, **Franz Cizek**, at Vienna in 1921 during his fifth tour to Europe. In his famous Juvenile Art Class which Cizek had established in 1897, Rabindranath must have seen children freely using paint and brush and must have felt that lack of skill and training was no handicap for expressing oneself through colours and

¹² **Roopa lekha:** J. All India Fine Arts & Craft Society, New Delhi, March 1958, Vol.xxviii, pp, 69-70.

shapes. The common elements in both of them to their approach to the education of children and the role of art in it, connote escape attention.¹³

Tagore's case was completely different. He grew into a painter without any formal or academic training. His paintings, are, absolutely his own, and quite inimitable technically or otherwise. It will be unwise, to look for any direct influence of any European painter or of any modern school of art on his paintings. Although we find their affinity with the works of some contemporary German painters like Munch, Marx and Paul Klee. Tagore's is, of course, not a unique case of a great poet being at the same time a painter also. **Lin-Yu-Tang** has said: *"Poetry and painting come from the same human spirit, and it is natural that the spirit and inner technique of both should be the same. The painter shows the same impression, the same method of suggestion, the same emphasis on an indefinable atmosphere, the same fantastic union with nature, which characterise Chinese poetry. For the poetic mood and picturesque moment are often the same, and the artist's mind which can seize the one and give it form in poetry, can also, with a little cultivation, express the other in painting"*. This is true of the genius of Rabindranath Tagore, Victor Hugo, Michelangelo, and several other versatile artists.

One may infer that painting was a child's play with Tagore, that it did not involve any discipline or hard work on his part, that he painted his pictures easily without effort. It is true, it all started as a play, but soon Tagore grew serious about it and ceaselessly toiled to develop his technique. It is said wrongly that he suddenly became a great painter. He continued his practice in his own way very silently and seriously for about 30 years before even his closest friends came to know about it. He was very shy and hesitant about showing them to anybody.¹⁴

¹³ Ratan Parimoo: *Rabindra Nath Tagore: Collection of Essays*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1980, pp.28, 34, 35.

¹⁴ *Roopa Lekha: J. All India Fine Arts & Craft Society*, March 1958, Vol.xxviii, p. 70.

After that for years later **Mukul Dey** states that Rabindranath accompanied him to the Ramgarh hills, and on this visit also, Rabindranath Tagore made sketches of his daughter in law and of the artist himself. Later, in 1920 when an art school had been opened at *Santiniketan*, Mukul Dey states that Rabindranath inaugurated a competition of paintings, himself contributing pictures and becoming one of the judges of the competition. These pictures were his sole attempts at painting and, as the movement started by his nephew Abanindranath developed it, after some time it was one of the greatest regrets of his life that he had not educated his hands or eyes or legs into doing things artistically.¹⁵

Tagore's pictures are not any interpretation of ideas or representation of facts; yet they convey a message and a mood unfalteringly. Without a formal training in painting, without submitting himself to the discipline of tradition, Tagore has emerged as a painter of great significance and value.¹⁶ Tagore says about his work: *"People often ask me about the meaning of my pictures I remain silent even as my pictures are it is for them to express and not to explain..."*¹⁷

Tagore's paintings are meaningless. He insisted that he took to painting, as he had earlier taken to song and music, without the benefit of any formal training and force of some inner urge for self-expression. "My pictures" he wrote in an introduction to the first exhibition of his paintings "are my verifications in lines if, by chance, they are entitled to claim recognition, it must primarily be for some rhythmic significance of form which is ultimate and not for any interpretation of an idea or representation of facts". Elsewhere, Tagore had referred to the sheer exuberance of delight in existence and relent

¹⁵ L.G. Archer: *Indian & Modern Art*, Ruskin House George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Museum Street London, 1959, p.49.

¹⁶ *Roopa Lekha*: journal of All India Fine Arts & Craft Society, March 1958, Vol xxiii, p.73.

¹⁷ <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/mp/2005/01/03/stories/2005010301750400.htm>

less promptings of a personality "beyond ego" that lie behind his verses and pictures.¹⁸

The extraordinary skill of a professional artist like Picasso is bound to enter his work even when he becomes a child. But as, in the case of Tagore, the technical skill had not been acquired before he began to paint, the resemblance to the state of mind of a child is far more obvious. It is this comparison with the impulses of a child painters be significant, to any extent the painting of Rabindranath Tagore may be called a sophisticated child art, much more accurately than similar work of the many advanced artists who have surrendered themselves to the methods of child art.

The second child hood of Rabindranath Nath Tagore could not prolong into adult hood without damage. As long as he plumbed the inner depths with a naïve wonder, and as long as he was devoted to the passionate ends of the third eye rescuing phantoms and shaping elements how ever fully but creatively he remained an honest child artist there was no question of trying to become a great painter, which he could not be. The compulsion was to be creative for the sheer delight of making gestures with the kinetic hand and perhaps of achieving the catharsis of erotic pleasures. As soon as he tasted the fruit of the tree of self-conscious knowledge he had began to embarrass himself with pre-occupations with natural forms. The truth must have downed on him that he lacked the skill of a great painter. So he struggles to acquire all the rudiments of technique nearly two thousand pictures of poor craftsmanship, which lack the painting quality of the fantasies of his innocent's child hood phase of expression.¹⁹

His drawings and paintings mostly in small sizes show that certain things can, perhaps, be better expressed in the visual language than in words, of which he was no doubt a master. He never faced the hindrance that formal

¹⁸ Mulk Raj Anand: *Book Review Poet, Painter, Painting by Rabindra Nath Tagore*, New Delhi, p.101.

¹⁹ Mulk Raj Anand: *Painting of Rabindranath Tagore*, Marg, volume 14, 1961, pp.2-6.

training can sometimes bring in the way of freedom and vitality of imagination.²⁰

“Tagore’s work has often been explained by giving the analogy of Child art. Though this point will be discussed again later, it may be noted here that a careful analysis of Tagore’s evolution will reveal that **Mulk Raj Anand’s** theory characterizing it is from “*scribble to expression*”, parallel to as happens in Child art, does not quite fit in with the actual course of his development as a painter. Tagore brings out imaged while scrabbling, the doodles the also delineate at the same time, whereas the child has to grow in age (from 3 year old to 5 year old) to be able to pass from the scribbling stage to image making stage. That kind of growth does not take place in Tagore.”²¹

In 1986 one could hear an even fainter echo of Coomaraswamy, confused by the intervening movement towards premeditated ‘Naive’ art. Critics described Tagore’s work as ‘naïve and almost childlike Picasso had painted a lot of child art late in his life, it was essentially cerebral painting. But Tagore as a painter had a pristine quality about him- something unpredicted in the history of art.’

Mulk Raj Anand’s efforts to establish Tagore as a child-artist through comparison with the work of Bombay children were not convincing, but his view of Tagore’s attitude had the merit of greater sensitivity than that of most others. ‘It is likely that he brought all his mature personality with him at the time of his surrender to painting; he tried as far as possible to take off peel after peel of the onion and become innocent.’ Parimoo’s conclusion, though based on a study of possible primitive art inspiration in Tagore’s painting which is not wholly convincing either, still seems the most sensible one: ‘It is only out of inhibitions that some critics continue to call him a child-artist’.²²

²⁰ Pran Nath Mego: *Contemporary Art in India A perspective*, National Book Trust India, 2001, p.32.

²¹ Ratan Parimoo: *Rabindra Nath Tagore: Collection of Essays*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1980, p.38.

²² Andrew Robinson: *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*, Satayjit Ray, Rupa & Co Calcutta, 1989, p.59.

He is already an old man, confident and mature, with fully developed all around sensibilities. Moreover, while child's scribbling is mere recording of motor act and exclusively a game of movement, Rabindranath's scribbling is accompanied by the exercising of the unconscious and is directed towards giving concrete forms to images. In fact image-making seems to be the whole basis of his painting from the beginning to the end. When child begins to draw images they are always schematic and based on a schema peculiar to children of that age and mental limitations.

However, one similarity with child art must be pointed out: that just as by the time a child grows in to a teenager his picture-making begin to be more naturalistic, in Tagore's paintings similar difference can be observed between his earlier work which has a similar flat pattern quality and the latter work, which is more painterly, where the images are built in terms of colour masses and conceived in space.²³

So Tagore's paintings have not pre-conception similar with child art. Because a Child has no possible intellect and awareness about the world while Tagore had thousands memories in his mind. He produced figures more purely clearly rather than a Child. In the last we can say that Tagore's pictures are "child like, but not childish.

Unconscious as the Source of his Paintings:

Rabindranath's unconscious approach about painting is his major and unique quality. He never produced pictures pre-idea and consciousness. It was no doubt fostered by much of Rabindranath's early writing which appeared to attribute his art to the workings of his unconscious mind. 'The imaginative pictures of the poet accumulated around him like a dancing multitude, unrecognised by his reason', and said the Comtesse de Noailles. While Henri Bidou wrote that 'it was simply the hand itself animated by its own elemental

²³ Ratan Parimoo: *Rabindra Nath Tagore: Collection of Essays*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1980, p.38.

spirit, the hand which has inscribed so many verses and in which rhythm is already inherent, which, without consulting the poet, produced from the immense number of possibilities, the one predestined design'.

Professor Sarkar had missed Tagore's irony. Unfortunately Archer did too. In his wide-ranging essay on Tagore's painting he attempted conclusively to locate the prime source of Tagore's painting-like much of that by Klee, Munch and Picasso-in the unconscious. This led him to dismiss most of Rabindranath's work after 1930 as a failure, because he believed it was promoted by his conscious urge to paint, unsupported by technical competence to do so. 'His art is incontestably modern', Archer wrote. 'In intimate essentials it *presupposes* [my emphasis] the modern theory of the unconscious, the revolutionary ideas of Freud and that re-evaluation of reason which has followed the discoveries of psychoanalysis'.

'Archer released in his painting the primal forces of the unconscious...Tagore's zest for painting left him gradually; as he became more and more a conscious artist his hand ceased to move automatically and his painting became less and less "Problem picture". As soon as he tasted the fruit of the tree of self conscious knowledge, he began to embarrass himself with pre-occupations with natural forms. The truth must have dawned on him that he lacked the skill of a great painter; wrote Mulk Raj Anand.

There can be no question at all that Tagore's art *began* as an unconscious process, but we can be almost as certain too that it very quickly became a collaboration between the conscious and unconscious, like that of most worthwhile artists. Many of the works 'have an air of being done on the spur of the moment-and often were', said a western critic. This seems to catch Tagore's peculiar fusion of mental preparation with physical spontaneity.

Tagore's own statements about the role of his conscious mind in his working methods are clear, at least after 1930. He told one of his close associates, Ranee Chanda, that he would often pour ink over an initial image

because it seemed too facile, and then try to dig it out with new depth and mystery. In 'My Pictures' we find him writing of his own reactions to his work: 'I interests me deeply to watch how lines find their life and character, as their connections with each other develop in various cadences and how they begin to speak in gesticulations'

Why, did **Archer** choose to attribute all Tagore's best work to the workings of the unconscious? **Subaramanyan** identified four reasons. **First**, there was the tendency of the time (both when Archer's opinions were being formed and when Tagore was painting) to look for all serious art in the promptings of the unconscious. **Secondly**, such a theory enabled Archer and others to over look Tagore's technical limitations. **Thirdly**, some of Tagore's own comments support Archer's view. **Lastly**, Archer disapproved 'of the sense of euphoria or childish delight that praise from European art critics in France, Germany, England, and Russia drove the poet into'.²⁴

Tagore says, that the consciousness of the Real within me seeks for its own corroboration the touch of the Real outside me. When it faith the self in me is depressed. When our surrounding is monotonous and insignificant, having no emotional reaction upon our minds, we became vague to our selves. For we are like pictures whose reality is helped by the background if it is sympathetic. According to the stages of our consciousness we have more or less been able to identify ourselves with this world, if not as a whole at least in fragments; and our enjoyment dwells in that where in we feel ourselves thus united. In art we express the delight of the unity by which this world realizes as humanly significant to us.

It is an interesting situation that before the process of automatism and tapping the unconscious source of pictorial imagery could influence American artist in a big way during the 1940's after their invention in Europe earlier, Rabindranath had by the end of 1920,s made this process as the gateway

²⁴ Andrew Robinson: *The Art of Rabindranath Tagore*, Satayjit Ray, Rupa & Co Calcutta, 1989, p.57-59,

through which he made his creative urges to out flow. Especially the work of such American painters could be noted as that of Arshille Gorky (died 1948) and Jackson Pollock (died 1956). Pollock around 1940 has created works which on unconscious through automatism, rather than depend entirely on the natural rhythmic quality of the motor activity. The fish like mouths, bodies, and monstrous eyes of the shapes in these works, plate 20, are quite parallel to Rabindranath's painting in plate 19. In her article Dr. Karamrishi explains how Klee and Kandinsky were creating 'new forms and colour harmonies absolutely independent of natural forms and answering to their own emotional need; And we meet once more a direct foretaste the kind of art which only six years later Rabindranath himself was to start to practice.

During his visits to Italy, France, Germany and England. No notes have been published to show exactly what pictures he saw, but the methods of three artists are so relevant to his own kind of painting that he had made some general contact with their work. The first artist is Klee, and in his work, there appear two of Tagore's most salient tenets. 'Klee is a type of personality whose mental functions are habitually based on feelings' and whose relation to the perceptions, which ensue is self contained, introspective, and subjective. He creates symbols, as Klee once said, to reassure his mind. It is the typical form of musical expression, and that is why it came so easily to Klee.

It is for the same reason that Rabindranath's own work came later to parallel Klee's art, for Rabindranath was a musician and their attitude to forms was equally close. Forms, in Klee's view, could not be expected to duplicate nature, for the very act of creation caused them to be reborn. But one point was essential. Both artists concede a purely formal character to shapes and lines, yet both acknowledge that however 'abstract' a form may be, it also possesses realistic association. Intellectual awareness or recognition is liable to occur and the act of spontaneous growth is to the extent deflected. In such a process the picture came first, the subject later, the little last of all, and thus, for the third time there is a remarkable coincidence in the methods of the two artists. For

Klee, the little was at best an approximation to the subject, a comment on one of its aspects, a parallel in words to its prevailing mood or even a mere label serving by some starting quality of phrasing to suggest the original.

In a similar way Rabindranath's pictures were given titles long after they were finished. For some years none of his pictures had titles at all. Experiment of this kind so fascinated Rabindranath that he rapidly discarded erasures as a starting point and allowed himself an even freer range of invention. For several months he was content to use a fountain pen, and in 1929 began to exploit a variety of coloured ink. When he began to compose more easily and freely and while his drawings continued to originate in a willing surrender to the unconscious, he now allowed more rational considerations to have at least partial play. In one erasure, for example a number of small triangles and projections have been ultimately continued to suggest a figure with a receding forehead. The earliest stages of such a composition must certainly have been unconscious, but to find projection may well have been deliberate. This intervention by the conscious or semi-conscious now became a part of the creative process.²⁵ It is necessary to notice that the chief 'source' of his art is the unconscious. Because the work's, he painted a very large number of pictures, is very miscellaneous; but it focussed attention on hitherto unexplored of art, especially the unconscious.

Rhythm As The Essence of his Approach to Art:

Rhythm is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of the artist.²⁶ Rhythm had been guiding all his **finner** works-composing poems, singing songs and painting pictures. But news from a newspaper even of some tragic happening is still born. Some news may be a mere commonplace in the obscurity of a

²⁵ W.G. Archer: *India and Modern Art*, Ruskin House, George Allen & Unwin Ltd Street, London, 1959, pp.57-58, 62,63.

²⁶ *Thoughts from Rabindranath Tagore*: Macmillan and Co Ltd, St Martin's Street, London, 1929, p.173.

journal, but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine.²⁷ Rabindranath's images are born of a powerful imagination and a sense of rhythm that characterises the Indian and Persian decorative art expressions. This is a kind of spirituality in his forms of men, women, birds, animals and trees and even inanimate objects. The evocative quality of his works seems to grow more silently immerse oneself in his dream images.²⁸ He would give a form, and from a form this quality have build up a whole painting with balance and rhythm as their strong points.²⁹ As Tagore himself explained: "*From my childhood I think I had an inborn sense of rhythm. The only training, which I had from my young days; was the training in rhythm, the rhythm in thought, the rhythm in sound. I had come to know that rhythm gives reality to that which is desultory, which is insignificant in itself. And, there fore, when the scratches in my manuscript cried like sinners, for salvation and assailed my eye, with the ugliness of their irrelevance, I often took more time in rescuing them into a merciful finality of rhythm*"...³⁰

He encouraged in his rhythmic futility by being offered moral and material incentives for its cultivation. Man is eager that his feelings for what is real to him must never die; it must find an imperishable form. The consciousness of this self of mine is so intensely evident to me that it assumes the character of immortality: He cannot imagine that it ever has been or can be non-existent.

It is the magic of mathematics, the rhythm, which is in the heart of all creation, which moves in the atom and, in its different measures, fashions gold and lead, the rose and the thorn, the sun and the planets. These are the dance-steps of numbers in the arena of time and space, which weave the Maya, the patterns of appearance, the incessant flow of change, that ever is and is not. It is

²⁷ S.R. Bakshi: *Rabindranath Tagore and the Challenges of the Today*, Om Publication, New Delhi, 2001, p.582.

²⁸ Pran Nath Mego: *Contemporary Art in India, A Perspective*, National Book Trust India, 2001, p. 32.

²⁹ Roopa Lekha: *Journal of All India Fine Arts & Craft Society*, March 1958, vol. 28, p.73.

³⁰ Ratan Premoo: *Rabindranath Tagore Collection of Essays*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. 1989, pp. 32-33.

the rhythm that churns up images from the vague and makes tangible what is elusive. This is *Maya*, This is the art in creation, and art in literature, which is the magic of rhythm. We believe any fact to be true because of a harmony, a rhythm reason, the process of which is analysable by the logic of mathematics, but not its results in me, just as we can count the notes but cannot account for the music. The mystery is that I am convinced, and this also belongs to the *maya* of creation, whose one important, indispensable factor is this self-conscious personality that I represent. I believe it is also a self-conscious personality, which has its eternal harmony with mine.³¹ Introducing his pictures, Rabindranath wrote, "One thing which is common to all arts is the principle of rhythm which transforms inert materials into living creatures. My instinct for it no carries of information, and my training in its use led me to know that lines and colours in art are no carriers on information; they seek their rhythmic incarnation in pictures".³² In his writings on art Tagore talks of the principle of rhythm as being that which gave his works significance. He also opposes the need for representation... *"...lines and colours in art are no carriers of information; they seek their rhythmic incarnation in Pictures. Their ultimate purpose is not to illustrate or to copy other facts or inner vision, but to evolve a harmonious wholeness, which finds its passage through our eyesight into imagination. It neither questions our mind for meaning nor burdens it with unmeaningness, for it is above all meaning"*.³³ The poet here enunciates a theory of art which was certainly not known among his Indian contemporaries; he is linked to such European painters as **Klee** and **Kandinsky**. His work, however, continues to be connected to writing, first by his predilection for lines, and again by his rhythmic forms and in the late stage even by a certain literariness. It is necessary to notice that the chief 'source' of his art is the unconscious. His forms seem to rise and appear from long buried distant memories. His hand is merely the instrument that records the scenes and

³¹ Rabindra Nath Tagore: *The Religion of Man*, Unwin Books London, 1961, pp. 84, 88.

³² Dr. Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya: *Tagore's Vision of A Global Family*, Enkay Publisher Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1982, p.59.

³³ Rabindranath Tagore, *Chitrarup* (Introduction)

creatures of those depths. Klee mentions the importance of this source. "But chosen are those artists who penetrate to the region of that secret place, where primeval power nurtures all evolution".³⁴ **Rhythm** had also guided his poetic activity, because when words "*are bound together by some bond of rhythm they attain their significance as a reality which can be described as creative, 'words are barren, dismal and uninspiring by themselves'*". Thus the artist did not start by thinking of the image first and then strive to bring that out by deliberate efforts. There do not exist any preparatory sketches. It is the sheer force of rhythms that has brought out the image.

Majority of Tagore's manuscript erasures are more than heraldic decorations organically related and it is clear that he had a tremendous sense of 'flat design'. And he himself talked of "rhythmic interrelationship" and "*harmonious wholeness*". Tagore maintained this quality when he began painting single images independently of the doodles. Rabindranath leaves the background empty and untouched. The single images appear appropriately placed in relation to the picture plane but the background is not fully worked out so that background often appears to be neutral.³⁵ Tagore was a lover of rhythm since his childhood. So his paintings could be constructed as neither objective nor Subjective. He painted just for the sake of painting. He was not interested in formulating any doctrine of art. **Rabindranath** himself assessed in formulating any doctrine art but be contented by simply "*saying that in my case my pictures did not have their origin in trained discipline, in tradition and deliberate attempt at illustration, but in my instinct for rhythm, my pleasure in harmonious combination of line and colours*". Rabindranath "*by his rhythm movements of line and grace of forms created such an extraordinary atmosphere that before long it led to a conflict between his creative faculty and inventive instinct.*" Lines and forms still came without conscious decision or

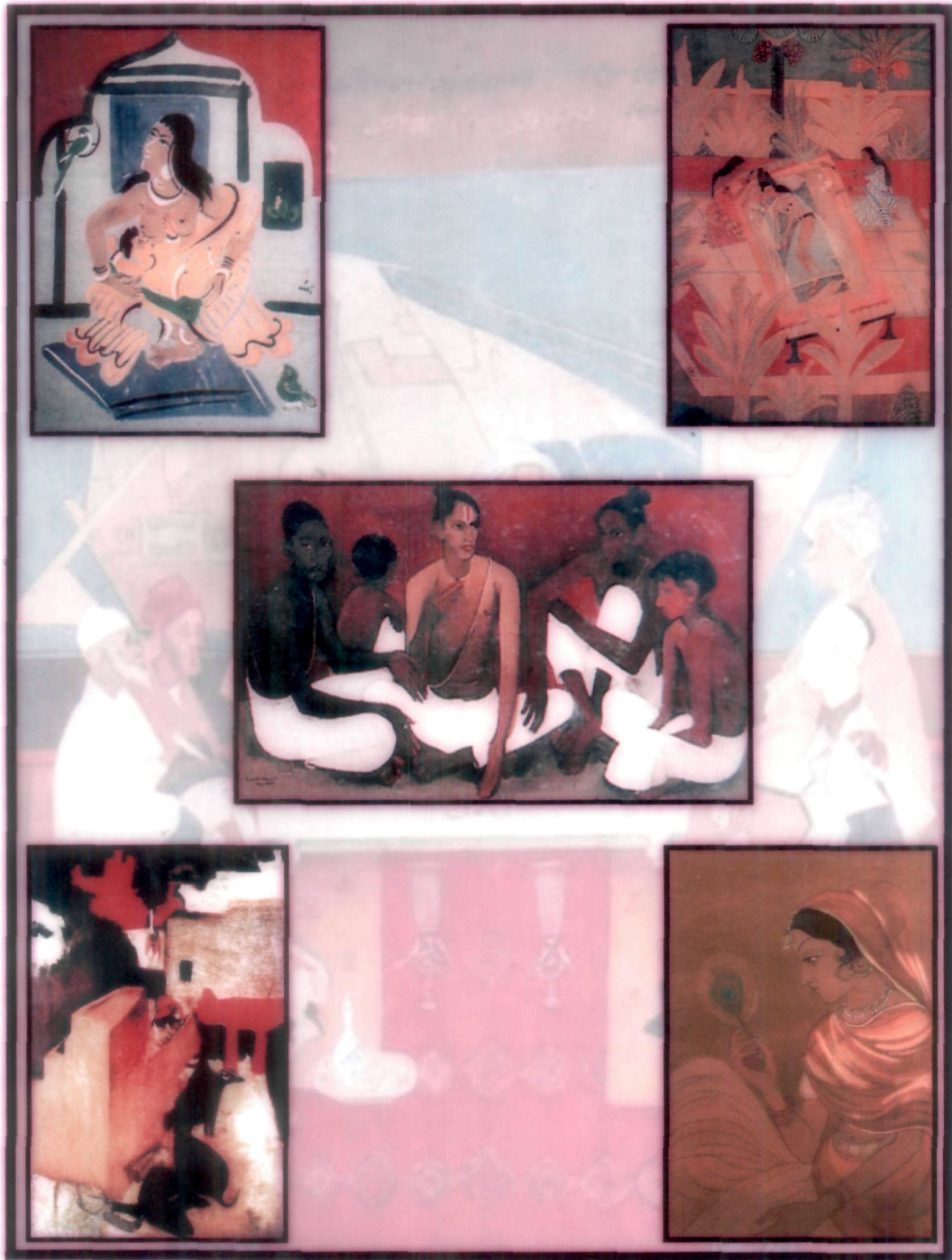
³⁴ Jaya Appasamy: *Abanindranath Tagore and The Art of His Times*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1968, p.90.

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 32-33. (*Rabindranath Tagore Collection of Essays*. 1989).

control while the process of projecting them on to paper still seemed to generate of its own accord a linear rhythm.

Today in Rabindra Bhavan alone there are about 200 paintings by him, many of which are fairly big size one is also struck by the variety of his techniques. Indeed, for each painting he had a new technique so that he had to invent his technique at every stage. He would give a form, and from a form balance and rhythm as their strong point. About the selection of his pigments and painting materials he was singularly unconventional.

Chapter -5



Chapter V

Tagore's Influence on Contemporary Painters and Their Work and Techniques: -

Nand Lal Bose:

One of the foremost figures in the modern renaissance of Indian painting and unquestionably the most popular of Indian artist is Nandlal Bose, the head of the *Kala Bhavan* at *Santiniketan*. He is not only the leader of the so-called Bengal school of painting but is also recognized as one of the master of the world.¹

After Abanindranath, Nandlal Bose is being acknowledged as the major painter of Bengal school. He had great respect for the Indian tradition not only in art but also in life, and so he treated mythological themes more realistically.² Nandlal's Ancestral Home was at *Banipur*, a village on the west bank of the river *Hooghly*, about ten miles to the south of Calcutta. He was born-on December 3, 1883- at a village called *Kharagpur* in the district of *Monghyr*, Bihar, where his father Purna Chandra Bose was in charge of a *Zamindare* forest office under the *Darbhanga Raj*. Nandlal lost his mother, Kshetramani, when he was about eight years old. But the impress she left on her son's mind was considerable. Kshetramani was a gentle-spirited woman. She was very good at making things-like designing moulds for preparing sweets, making small catechu dolls, artistic needle-work on *Kantha* patterns, etc., all these being accomplishments for women brought up in the traditional culture of an old time middle-class Hindu household. When his mother, or perhaps an aunt, was doing one of these things, the child Nandlal would be sitting by, absorbed in watching beauty and form taking shape in

¹ G.Venkata Chalam: *Contemporary Indian Painters*, Nalanda Publication Bombay, 1948, p.29.mmmmm

² Tomory: *A History of Fine Arts in India and The West*, Oriental Longman Ltd, India, 1989, p.280.

the work of dexterous fingers. Nandlal would spend many an hours- an eager, entranced spectator of the transformation of clay into dolls or images of gods and goddesses.³

He was very fond of painting from his very child hood, luckily he got a learned teacher like Abanindranath Tagore.⁴ At *Kharagpur*, as a boy, Nandlal heard of a painter in a nearby village. He searched him out. The fellow was a crank. He lived by painting pictures for the villagers. One day Nandlal took to him painting materials, paper, paints and a brush-and asked him to make a picture. On completing the course of the “*Middle*” school at Kharagpur, Nandlal was sent to Calcutta for further studies.⁵

At fifteen, **Nandlal** went to Calcutta to continue his education. There he studied at the central collegiate school for his entrance examination and then joined the General Assembly College to study for the F.A. examinations. But his Passion remained art. All his time was spent collecting books and magazines to study the works of great painters. Even the money meant for his school fees went into art. He failed in the F.A. Examination, and then joined the Metropolitan College where again he did not pass the examination. Nothing persuaded him, away from art. Nandalal incessantly kept learning to paint, picking up model drawing, still-life, etc. From his cousin Atul Mitra copying the works of European masters (like Raphael’s *Madonna*) and the style of Raja Ravi Verma’s (as seen in *Mahashveta*). When he was yet feeling his way, Bose was elated when he suddenly recognized his future Guru, Abanindranath Tagore, from his paintings like ‘*Buddha*’ ‘*Sujata*’ and ‘*Bajra-Mukta*’ he was too shy to ask Abanindranath to accept him as a disciple, Bose took his classmate Satyan to speak to the Guru on his behalf. Bose went with some paintings. Not only Abanindranath Tagore, but also Havell and Lala Iswari Prasad examined them and appreciated the maturity of lines and

³ *An Album of NandLal Bose with a Biographical Note*: Santiniketan Asramik Sangha Calcutta, 1956, p. 2.

⁴ L.C. Sharma: *A Brief History of Indian Painting*, Goel Publishing House, Meerut. 2002, p.155.

⁵ *An Album of Nanda Lal Bose with a Biographical Note* Santiniketan Asramik Sangha Calcutta, 1956, p. 5-6.

experimentation in his works. Some were copies of European paintings but among the originals '*Mahasveta*' won Hevell's admiration while '*Ganesh*' won over Lala Iswari Prasad.⁶

When Nandalal was a student at the Art School sister Nivedita visited it one day in the company of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose. Nandalal's work made a great inspiration on her. Nandalal was a student at the art school for five years. When he finished the course the authorities of the Art School offered him a post which he refused. He assisted in the preparation of a catalogue of Abanindranath's famous 'Tagore Collection'. Nandalal copied for Abanindranath a large number of old drawings.⁷

Abanindranath's Art School was not just a teaching institution, but a locus for extending and deepening the appreciation and enjoyment of both classical and folk art through a variety of activities like recitations and discussions. In the beginning *Harinarayan Basu* and *Iswari Parsad* guided Nandalal in the school, but later Abanindranath himself guided his growth. During this time, Bose was his only student, though later many more joined him. While his disciple for over five years, Bose picked up a lot from Abanindranath. His method of teaching, simple and engaging as it was enlivened the classroom atmosphere and inspired rapt attention from his disciples. Stories from Indian history, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha were woven into his classroom. Buddha's stories, Goddess Kali, Thandava Dance narrated in the class fired Bose's imagination. Famous artists recognized Bose's original style and art critics like Gaganendranath Tagore, Anand Coomaraswamy and O. C. Ganguly. Along with being a great painter Nandalal.

Bose played a leading role in the renaissance of art in India along with Asit Kumar Haldar, Surendranath Ganguli, Samrendra Gupta, Kshitindranath Majumdar, Surendranath Kar, K. Venkatappa, Hakim Mohd Khan,

⁶ www.indianarticle.com/arteducation/bose.shtml-23k-Cached - Similar pages

⁷ *An Album of Nandalal Bose with A Biographical Note*, Santiniketan Asramik Sangha Calcutta, 1956, pp.10-11.

Shailendranath Dey, Durga Simha etc, who were all inspired by Abanindranath Tagore.⁸ Nandalal became associated with the work of Indian Society of Oriental Art. His picture *Shiva-Sati* at one of the Society's exhibitions brought him a prize of Rs.500. Nandalal visited Gaya, Banaras, Agra, Delhi. Mathura and *Virindaban*. The tours, in North, and South India, formed a special chapter in Nandalal's life.⁹

Ajanta's paintings are seminal to Indian and Asian Art. Their influence traveled to other parts of Asia with Buddhism, and can be felt in the paintings of China and Japan to this day. Their influence in contemporary Indian art came through the Bengal school, when Lady Herringham and her assistants, which included three students of Abanindranath Tagore: Nandalal Bose, Asit Haldar and Samrendra Gupta, spent three years (1909 to 1911), copying the paintings of *Ajanta*.¹⁰

After completing their allotted tasks at *Ajanta*, Nandalal and his three colleagues returned to Calcutta in February, 1911. By this time Nandalal's fame as an artist had spread, not only in India, but also abroad Abanindranath and his colleagues belonging to what was now called the 'Bengal School' of painting with an established position in the country roused interest among art-lovers and connoisseurs in some foreign countries also.¹¹ In 1909 he had also come to contact with attracted personality Rabindranath Tagore, noted poet and philosopher, and this marked the beginning of a life-long association. All of them were concerned in one way or another with India's cultural regeneration and its conceptual bases. In the summer of 1914 Rabindranath invited him to *Santiniketan* where he was involved with a novel educational experiment, and gave him a moving community reception; he was probably trying to inveigle Nandalal to join in as a co-worker. Nandalal lost his heart. Its rural environment inspired him, with a near religious experience; all its little features seemed to

⁸ www.domusartgallery.com/-20k - Cached - Similar pages

⁹ Ibid. p.12, (*An Album of Nandalal Bose with A Biographical Note,*)

¹⁰ www.visualartuk.com/exhibit_eraofmaster.asp - 88k - Cached - Similar pages

¹¹ *An Album of Nandalal Bose with a Biographical Note*, Santiniketan Asramik Sangha Calcutta, 1956, p.14.

wear a halo. In the following year he joined Rabindranath on a boat trip on the Pasma River, and he was taken greatly up with the vision of Bengal's countryside, and moving human types. These experiences were crucial.¹²

Nandlal settled down at *Santiniketan* in the year 1920. This was a vital decision on his part in respect of his personal development as well as the development of modern Indian art. Under the overall supervision of Rabindranath Nath Tagore, Nandlal, along with a group of promising young talents, concentrated upon experimenting with varied art forms.¹³ *Santiniketan* environment, Rabindranath's personality and the challenge of his new educational experiment exercised a magnetic pull on Nandlal. Rabindranath on his side found him a man of Kindred sensibility with whom he would find easy to collaborate. He was met Arai Kempo a Japanese artist which on a tour to Japan (in 1916). Arai kempo, came in India 1916 to teach Nandlal Bose and others. By this time Rabindranath had organized a cultural group in his house in Joransanko, which he christened *Vichitra*, and along with it in an art-class, in which Nandlal had a major responsibility. Rabindranath wanted him in *Santiniketan* to take charge of *Kala Bhavan*, the Art department of Visva-Bharti, the new international university he was planning. Nandlal was in a dilemma. He went for a short while to *Santiniketan* in 1919, then returned to Calcutta, then decided again to move to *Santiniketan* for good. The request was to take the charge of the Art department—*Kala Bhavan* of *Visva-Bharti* in September 1919.¹⁴

Rabindranath could easily include Nandlal into his incourage during his visits to China and Japan in the year 1924. This was a great opportunity for him. Going through the collections of the works of the master-painters of China and experiencing the conflict between traditional excellence of the Chinese paintings and contemporary propensity for imitating Western art, he

¹² Jaya Appasamy, Sandho Chaudhari: *Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) Centenary Exhibition*, Inational Gallery of Modern Art Jaipur House, India Gate, New Delhi, 1983, pp.20-23.

¹³ *Nand Lal Bose A Collection of Essays: A Centenary Volume*: Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi, Rabindra Bhavan, 1983, p. 41.

¹⁴ Ibid. P.22:(*Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) Centenary Exhibition* ' 1983. p.22)

realized how a great heritage was in disarray due to lack of proper understanding and leadership.¹⁵ The leaders of the Japanese renaissance, Taikwan, Kwanzan, Hishida, Arai and others of the Nippon Bijistuin gave him a certain insight into the technical nature of painting.¹⁶ The *Santiniketan* experience broadened Nandalal's art perspectives. *Santiniketan* gave him a *raison d'être* for such an interest. For here his responsibility did not quest. Rabindranath had stated in no uncertain terms that man's sensory encounter with the environment was as important as his mind's enquiry into its inner mystery, and any worthwhile society should provide for both. Nandalal took it up as a challenge. So he gave attention to all, inducing them to learn alpana, batik, leather-craft, and picture making with simple units; besides he tried to bring cleanliness and order into the campus, considered elegance to its building and interiors, visual variety and liveliness to its festivals and dramas, a distinctive graphic image to its publications, even set standards of refinement in personal and group conduct, so that, at one time he managed to bring to the place a special aesthetic aura, the hall-mark of which was a dynamic simplicity, an artless art. Under the general canopy of Rabindranath's ideas the system he evolved laid major stress on the art students initiative and originality, it did not approve of streamlined delivery of techniques and skills.

It considered art as more of a vocation (to answer an inner calling) than a mere profession. It recognized the importance of art. Students needed to understand his artistic and cultural heritage, its forms and techniques, but analytically, testing their viability in terms of his drives and impulses, and their own life-content. In formulating this he openly acknowledged his debt to the ideas of Rabindranath and Okakura but detailing was all his own.¹⁷ He had great admiration for Rabindranath. A feeling of awe heightened his respect for the poet. Nandalal met Rabindranath Tagore. Nearing fifty at that time greeted

¹⁵ Ibid p.40. (*Nand Lal Bose A Collection of Essays*, 1983)

¹⁶ G. Venkata Chalam: *Contemporary Indian Painters*, Nalanda Publication, Bombay, 27 Dec 1948, p.29.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 20-23. (*Nandalal Bose (1882-1966) Centenary Exhibition*, 1983)

him with a smile. He said. "I have seen your paintings, I like them, and now I would like you to illustrate some of my poems in Chavbanika. Rabindranath's paintings appeared to him independent of the visual, factual, material world. Art, Nandlal felt had to be such an essence; it should have the flavour but not the flesh of individual facts. In his recollections with Rabindranath he states:

"Gurudev once told me that truth, however you may define it, had the power of attraction inherent in it. It must draw your inner self towards itself, and the more you open yourself to it, the more you feel its hypnotic, influence. The unnatural through its very novelty may attract us for some time, but the attraction wears off if there is no truth in it. The very fact that Gurudev's experiments in the grotesque instead of repelling us for continue to attract us more and more as time passes, proves that the element of truth is not a negligible factor."

Nandlal had no illusions about his ability to teach or Rabindranath's capacity to learn methods or techniques. Rabindranath's paintings would have been initially a dismaying experience; but when the initial shock wore off and when he was able to disengage his vision from his habit of carrying the measuring scale of tradition, he did see the worth of Rabindranath's art.¹⁸ When by 1938 or 1939, he completed at least 3000 pictures. Nandlal Bose says that even many renowned artists could not paint so many pictures within such a short span of time. Rabindranath was first inspired by his own scribbles on manuscripts to draw something. He says *"When the scratches in my manuscripts cried like sinners for salvation and assailed my eyes with the ugliness of their irrelevance, I often took more time in restoring them into a merciful finality of rhythm than in carrying on what was an obvious task."*

In a different place Nandlal Bose says. *"That which lends charm to poetry and clothes it in beauty is the same element, which gives life and colour in art compositions. Gurudev had already developed in himself the three*

¹⁸ Winkar Kowshik: *Nandalal Bose The Doyen of Indian Art*, National Book Trust India by the New Delhi, 1985, pp.33-36.

essential qualities of an artist before he took up the brush namely, a sense of rhythm, a sense of proposition and a sense of identity.” This particular feature of Rabindranath’s art may give the critics the idea that he was the propagator of primitive art. But according to Nandlal Bose, these paintings were modern and intellectual in spirit.¹⁹ In the last, *Santiniketan*, where he was encouraged by Rabindranath Tagore to experiment with form, medium and theme. This was a phase when his art came close to life and reality. Nandlal Bose illustrated many of Rabindranath’s poems, and even designed the sets for the latter’s musical plays. He became the official designer of the Indian National Congress, creating “magical cities” out of bamboo, thatch, paper and pots at Haripura and Faizpur.²⁰

Nandlal Bose has succeeded in drawing the attention of art-lovers the world over by his significantly original interpretations of some of the classical myths and legends of India. About from religious sentiments and theological superstitions, it is indeed too much to expect from an educated modern Indian any interest or admiration for Puranic’ stories rendered in stale and worn-out pictorial forms. “One cannot forever go on ruminating on the self-same forms of *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, *Lakshmi* or *Rama* and *Krishna*. The Lord of the Universe, *Mahadev*, is described in the ancient Hindu books not only a *Maha Yogee* (Prince of Ascetics) but also as *Naterja*, (the King of Dancers), and Nandlal has given to the modern world his own version of these two aspects of *Shiva* in his paintings.²¹ His art is fundamentally linear and is profoundly influenced by *Ajanta* inform and motif, his graceful calligraphy has aboard Oriental foundation, suggested in part by the *Mughal* and *Rajput* schools, and owing some thing also to the far eastern idioms.²² Nandlal has coined new types from the richness of his imagination and the inner vision of his soul. But rightly also

¹⁹ Tapati Dasgupta: *Social Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore. A Historical Analysis*, Abhinav Publication, Haiz Khan, 1993, p.44.

²⁰ <http://www.newindpress.com/sunday/colltems.asp?2ID=SEC20030926093630>

²¹ G. Venkata Chalam: *Contemporary Indian Painters*, Nalanda Publication, Bombay, 27 Dec 1948, pp.29-30.

²² P.R. Rama Chandra Rao: *Modern Indian Painting*, Publication Rachna Bhernas Enagardens Madras 4 Indian 1953, p. 16.

has he used the thousand and one forms and figures, gestures and attitudes, poses and postures and other details of ornamentation, which those masterminds of *Ajanta* conceived, evolved and designed from the spacious depths of their spiritual consciousness. Nandalal's special contribution to modern art is this recreation of the forgotten art-tradition of India.²³

Nandalal's approach to modern art was positive and practical. He was against the aping of the Western styles and techniques as well as the initiation of traditional styles and techniques by Indian artists. Nandalal did not find anything new in modern art. According to him, intellectually committed Indians were better than artistically contrived modernity. Art in essence is not just filling up of given space with lines and colours but something more serious. Art, which is not a product of inner compulsions, can never endure. Nandalal Bose accepted modern art as it related to the European ethos, he condemned it as an irrelevance and incongruity in the Indian context.²⁴

His great masterpiece "*Shiva mourning over Parvati*" is a work to be ranked with the best painting ever done by a master under any clime. As a painter of Hindu mythological subjects he is still the greatest among the moderns. His robust technique and virile imagination, even in small-scale studies of heroic episodes, though often reminiscent of *Ajanta*, are delight fully his own. Its better known painting like "*Sati*" "*Kaikey*", "*Ahalya*" "*Karma*", "*Umsa's Grief*", "*Sauata*" and others have not only brought him immediate recognition and fame as a master artist's. His lines always tend to move, sway. Curve, ever suggesting motion. The London editions of "The collected poems of Tagore" contain some of the best examples of this illustrative art of Nandalal Bose. The lovely illustration he did fore Tagore's "*Nateer Puja*" revealed the strength of his lines and the rich harmony of his colours.²⁵

²³ Ibid. p.31,(*Contemporary Indian Painters*)

²⁴ Ibid. pp.28-29(*Nandalal Bose A Collection of Essays,*)

²⁵ Ibid. pp.31-32. (*Contemporary Indian painters*)

Internally restless, Nandlal Bose always carried with him a stack of blank cards, a slab of ink and brush. Even sensitive to the stimuli surrounding him, he used to give into his impulses to record these, recall old images and invent new ones, through small spontaneous sketches in monochrome. Nandlal Bose always kept the habit of realistic sketching on the spot and doing finished drawings of sceneries, people, animals and vegetation. Fundamental directness, seasoned details a convincing overall finish and emotion marked his expression.²⁶ Nandlal came into close touch with the Mahatma first in 1935, Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress. He became a nationalist in the thirties, when he decorated the Pandal of the Haripura Congress at the invitation of M.K. Gandhi, whom he admired. Bose also designed and embellished the Constitution of India.²⁷ He set a model for *Pavilions* and *pandals*, gateways and halls which is fast becoming a fashion in India and widely copied everywhere.²⁸ Since 1911, Bose has exhibited in several exhibitions such as at *Crystal Plais, England* in 1911, the *Societe des peintres. Orientalistes, Francais, Grand palaces*, Paris traveling to Belgium, the Netherlands & imperial Institute, England (1911). Traveling Exhibition Organized by the Indian School of Oriental Art and the American Federation of Art 1924, Athenee Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland (1928), Lucknow and Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress (1937,1954).²⁹ Nand Lal Bose retrospectives were held at Calcutta in 1954 and at the Centenary Retrospective Exhibition, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (1982).³⁰

Nandlal's first and last love is *Santiniketan*, where, surrounded by his pupils he lives a dedicated life Bose was regarded at times as a partisan idol, a prominent leaders of the Nationalist backlash against colonialism. Yet despite his nationalistic bent, Bose was not a defensive antagonist. He aims of India's

²⁶ www.indianarticle.com/arteducation./bose.shtml

²⁷ Vinayak Prohit: *Art of Transitional Indian*, Twentieth Century, vol. 2, Publication Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1988, p.693.

²⁸ Ibid. p.34, (*Contemporary Indian Painters*)

²⁹ This article about a South Asian writer or poet is a stub. Retrained from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nandlal Bose"

³⁰ en. wikipedia. org/wiki/Nandlal _Bose -13k-Cached - Similar Pages

creative genius, so as to make its stand with the world healthy and fruitful. He died on April 16th 1966, in Calcutta. Thus we can say that Nandalal is the only Artist who got success lives in his culture. He participated in Bengal movement through his art that reflected in Indian culture.

Amrita Sher-Gil:

For a woman painting in India, Amrita She-Gil is inheritance. No perspective on our art is complete without reference to Sher-Gil. Her commitment to her self image as an artist, as much as her brilliance and flair, has ensured for two or three generations of women artists since, the right to be taken seriously. She propended a new style of painting with the combination of the western modern art with that of Indian art. But because of her premature death this artist could not complete her work of this integration.

Amrita Sher-Gil was an innovative painter of modern India. Her father Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, scholar and savant, learned in *Sanskrit* as well as in Persian, came of an old Sikh family of the village of Majitha, in Amrita district of the Punjab. Her mother Mari Antoinette was a Hungarian. She Punjab with princess Bombay, who had through a public notice published in London, sought a companion to travel with her to India, the land of her forbearers.³¹ Marie Antoinette made the acquaintance of Umrao Singh in Shimla and acquaintance led to marriage. Amrita Sher-Gil was born on 30 January 1913 in Buda in the apartments of the family situated at 4 Szilagyí Dezső tér overlooking the Danube.³² One year later on March 2, 1914 her sister Indira was born. The out break of the world war kept the family in Hungary for six years. They returned to India in 1920 and made for the next nine years.³³ The scenic beauty of the hills and dales and of the Himalayas peaks not far away from their summer Hill residence left a deep impact on Amrita's aesthetic sensibility. Upon the recommendation of the English teacher who had been

³¹ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

³² Gyula Wojtilla: *Amrita Sher-Gil and Hungary*, Allied Publisher, New Delhi, 1981, p. 13.

³³ <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/0020525/windowabove.htm>.

hired to teach art and music and who had soon recognized her unusual talent, she in 1924 went, her mother. In April 1929 she joined **Grand Chaumiera**, well known art school in Paris, where she studied for one semester, shifting thereafter to the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts.³⁴ Amrita learnt the basics at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the premier art institute of that time. She lived life to the hilt in the cafes and streets of the city, Plunging with abandon into the Bohemian Paris art world.³⁵

She made a very minute study of the human anatomy, perspective and various techniques of oil paintings. The encouragement. She received from her teacher, Lucien Simon, Who admired her talent and frequently commended her progress, stimulated her creative energies. In Paris, she frequented art studios, art Galleries and art museums; she studied the original works of the great masters. The paintings of Paul Cezanne taught her the art of compact composition and the technique of modeling to represent the third dimension. Gaugien, Tahilian paintings, with their sensitive draughtsmanship and effective use of colours, especially his technique of using flat areas of pigments marking Tahitian sunshine, made a special appeal to her.³⁶

At the instance of her uncle, the Ideologist Ervin Baktay, the Sher-Gil family moved to Paris in 1929 so that Amrita could study art. Amrita flourished in Paris but by 1934, she was longing to return to India. "I began to haunted by an intense longing to return to India, feeling in same strange inexplicable way that there lay my destiny as a painter."³⁷ On her return to India Amrita's first effort is to find a mode of delineation appropriate to her Indian subject.³⁸ Because she knew she could paint in India alone and in no

³⁴ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

³⁵ *Out Look*: The weekly News magazine Publisher. Maheshwari, 20 March 006, p. 74.

³⁶ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

³⁷ *The Hindu*: Sunday, 2 April, 2006. Article.

³⁸ *Marg*: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, Vol. xxxv, No.4. 1982. p.62.

other country. Her first impression on her return is a key to the greatness of her work.³⁹

In June 1938, she traveled to Hungary to marry her cousin, Dr. Victor Eagan. After their honeymoon in Europe, the couple returned to India. Dr. Eagan took up employment with Amrita's uncle, Sunder Singh Majithia, who owned a sugar factory at Saraya. Dr. Eagan served there as a physician. Here at Saraya, Amrita went through a new phase in her creative experience. In September 1941, Amrita migrated to Lahore where her husband, Dr. Eagan, set up his own practice. Here she started work on a painting of buffaloes in a suburban setting, which was never to be completed.⁴⁰ They spent together about four years and this short time was very fruitful for Amrita's art. For Amrita he was the only man who could understand her and he was curiously enough a Hungarian.⁴¹ When back home in India, Amrita was eager to win recognition. She found two champions: Karl Khandalaval, a noted art critic in Bombay, and fellow Hungarian Charles Fabri, who lived in Lahore. Both acclaimed her as perhaps the greatest painter of the Century. Despite the build up, she found few byres. She traveled across India with her canvas. Nawab Salar Jung of Hyderabad kept her painting for a few days but returned then. She tried the Maharaja of Mysore but he preferred Ravi Varma's calendar art to hers. Amrita was not as beautiful as she fancied herself and depicted in her self-portraits. She was fair, petite, with large Searching eyes and full lipped. She wore bright colored saris and large beaded jewellery.

Controversy pursued Amrita to her last and continues to this day. When she was taken ill, she put it down to food poisoning. The other and more reliable version is that an early suitor was Yusuf Ali Khan, son of the Nawab of Akbarpur. He made her pregnant and infected her with venereal disease. She turned to cusion husband Victor Eagan, to get rid of the unwanted fetus and

³⁹ *Marg*: Journal of .J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, vol. 6th, No. 1, 1951, p.20.

⁴⁰ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

⁴¹ Yashodra Dalmian: *Amrita Shergill A Life*, Pengui Viking, 2006, p. 39.

disease. Victor botched up the abortion. After her death, her mother accused Victor of having murdered her. After Amrita died England declared war on Hungary and Victor was put in jail as an enemy. Amrita Sher-Gil's career, tragically brief, remains a landmark in history of the art of painting.⁴²

Her painting techniques were forthrightly western; yet, she was consumed with the intense longing of an expatriate to return to an imagined India. She convinced herself that at the touch of the sea-change, not only in the subject and the spirit, but, also in its technical expression, becoming "more fundamentally Indian". She proclaimed her artistic mission thenceforth "to interpret the life of Indians and particularly the poor Indians pictorially, to paint those silent images of infinite submission and patience, to depict their angular brown bodies, strangely beautiful in their ugliness".⁴³ From the purely technical viewpoint of laying paint on the canvas, her entire work may be divided into two categories. Her earlier work executed with thick pigment and with tremendous bravura of brushwork, and later paintings with their quiet applications of paint where the gestures of the brush are almost eliminated from the surface of the canvas.⁴⁴

She went to live in Simla, the fashionable summer capital of the Raj in the Himalayan foothills, where her liberated lifestyle caused a stir. She began painting poor hill people who, to her romantic and naïve mind, embodied the spirit of India. She gave them large doleful eyes and vacant stares, exuding an expression of utter hopelessness. Her lanky and angular figures shrouded in homespun materials look fragile and melancholic, reflecting, an inner melancholy of her own.⁴⁵ The first few paintings on which Amrita worked in her studio in Shimla show a sculpturesque technique, both in the folds of the dresses and the severity of planes.⁴⁶ In colours she created a vision of her own and it is no exaggeration to say that she was one of the world's greatest

⁴² *Outlook*: weekly news Magazine, Publish, Maheshwaer Peri, 27 March, 2006, p.84.

⁴³ P.R. Rama Chandra Rao: *Contemporary Indian Art*, India Ambalture Madras, 1969, p.10.

⁴⁴ *Roopa-Lekha*: J.of All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, Vol. Lix, No. 162, April 1987. p. 98.

⁴⁵ Balraj Khanna and Aziz Kurtha: *Art of Modern India*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1998. p. 19.

⁴⁶ http://sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_shergil

colorists of her time. Though she always maintained that form and colours were her first considerations, it is apparent that she kept them in the forefront as the only way to discipline her emotional compliances and prevent that degeneration which unrestrained emotion can bring out.⁴⁷

Her areas of colours became wider, more expressive. And the sum total of her composition always in higher colours, revealed the mastery of her singular style, greater daring, and the intelligent harmony of her method.⁴⁸ It is clear that few contemporary Indian have handled colours with quite the passionate joy, which Amrita Sher-Gil brought to it. And yet all these gay and bright colours are used to communicate the essential melancholy of this land and her inhabitants. In-group of three Girls and Child Wife the colours are even brighter and resultant sadness more poignant.⁴⁹ From *Ajanta* to the Basholi works to Mahabalipuram to Tagore's paintings, Amrita was hungry to see.⁵⁰

As early as 1930, when she saw Rabindranath Nath Tagore Paris exhibition, she had fully accepted his novel distortions of line and colours—"I like his drawing well than his poetry even, she exclaimed. The neo- Bengal school, on the other hand, filled her with aggressive storm.⁵¹ In 1936 she made pilgrimages to the shrines of Indian art. She went first to see the wall paintings of *Ajanta* and the near by temple of *Ellora*, hewn out of rock.⁵² Painting of this period show how well she under stands mannerist in alienations in these two divergent traditions. It is by testing her European sensibility against her Indian experience, and splendid examples of Indian painting, that she has arrived as a modern Indian.⁵³ The freshness and originality of *Ajanta* and *Ellora*, the

⁴⁷ *Marg*: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, number.1. Vol. 6th, 1952, p. 29.

⁴⁸ R.Del Furlaso: *Three Painters*, Dhol Memal Ram Chand, New Delhi, p.19.

⁴⁹ http://www.sikhiwoki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

⁵⁰ W.G. Archer: *India and Modern Art*, Published by Ruskin House George Allen & Unwin Museum Street London, 1959, p.84.

⁵¹ Yashodra Dalmian: *Amrita Shergill A Life*, Pengui Viking, 2006, p. 92.

⁵² http://www.sikhiwoki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

⁵³ *Marg*: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, vol. xxxv, No.4, Sept. 1982, p.62.

sensuous mural of the *Mattancheri* palace in Cochin and the strength of the *Kushan* sculpture, which she saw at Mathura, began to characterize her work. She became acquainted with Indian miniatures and fell in love with the intense Basholi School. She even attempted to include certain elements of Rajput painting in her later work.⁵⁴

Influenced by Basholi painting and Mughal miniatures, colours are more intensity the hero of her work of this period than ever before. "I can not control my appetite for colour," she said to her friend, "and I wonder if I ever will." One of greater reflection, of more conscious painting, more observation and more stylization in the sense of nature." *Elephant Promenade*, *The Swing*, *Horse and Groom*, *Ancient story Teller*, *Women Resting on a Charpoy*. *Haldi Grinders*, and *Camels* show her experimenting with compositions more derivative from the Kangara and Mughal paintings than of any of her previous work, but there is a new brightness, a new precision and new simplicity here, without the atmosphere of a sad, elfin music, the hallmark of her tender sensibility. Amrita seems to have been concerned in her art with redressing the balance of certainty and restating basic truth about human nature, human folly, and human inadequacy, about the pain and pleasure of the creative act, and about suffering and the joy of being. She developed a unique style of painting, maintaining a mysterious harmony of idea, perception and visual image. She rejected verisimilitude and refused to reproduce a mirror image of actual scene and turned from an empirical to a conceptual method of representation. Her stylistic implications and colours harmonious introduced a new trend in Indian painting.⁵⁵ Amrita Sher-Gil is important as a turning point in the story of modern Indian painting. Since her works appeared, painters have turned more to the use of oil in place of the wash and watercolour and there are also many later painters with a reminiscent style. Her work, while it was characteristically

⁵⁴ <http://www.Indianarticle.com/arteducation.amrita.shtml.P.1,2>

⁵⁵ http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Amrita_Shergil

synthetic, has given a great impetus to modern art in India and the inspiration to go forward in experimental directions.⁵⁶

In September 1934 Amrita wrote: Modern art has led me to the comprehension and appreciations of Indian painting and sculpture .It seems paradoxical but I know for certain that had we not come away to Europe, I should, perhaps, never have realized that a fresco from Ajanta or a small piece of sculpture in the Musee Guimet is worth more than the whole Renaissance.⁵⁷

The most puzzling aspect of Shergil's was is her dependence on the model. Shergill, strangely, seems to know only two categories of painting-Studio and plain air.⁵⁸

Her paintings could now be compared to those of Rabindranath Tagore or Jamini Roy, the two artists whose work she most valued. Although she never met Tagore, she found his work compelling to the point of contradicting Karl Khandalaval, whose opinions she normally set great store by. In a letter to Karl from Simla in August 1937, she wrote, 'I have not seen much of his (Tagore) Paintings, he is trying to ape the primitive.'⁵⁹ She far from flattering about Tagore's poetry either, she described it as "*piddling little poetry*" and wrote." I have as profound a contempt for it as I have for the mannerism of the mass." She conceded however that "the only thing that Tagore can do is paint." On another occasion, reverting to the subject of Tagore, she said she didn't think he was "trying to ape the primitives or is a primitive at all...It is the usual case of 'his eminence being due to the surrounding flatness of the country.'" Earlier when she had seen reproductions of Tagore's painting for the first time and had called them "delightful," She had commented:" I don't think he is trying to ape the primitiveness. As a matter of fact, I found his work rather

⁵⁶ *Marg*: J.J. Bhava for Marg, National Center for the Performing Arts at 24, Hami Mody Street, Mumbai, Vol 10, No, 2 March 1957, P. 58.

⁵⁷ Pran Nath Mego: *Contemporary Art in India, A perspective*, National Book Trust India 2001, p.38.

⁵⁸ Gayatri Sinha: *Expressions & Evocations Contemporary Women Artists of India*: Marq Publication, p.23.

⁵⁹ Iqbal Singh: *Amrita Shergill A Biography*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. Printed at kay kay Printers, 150-D kamal a Nagar Delhi, India, p. 96.

sophisticated (though of course his technique is not good enough yet for successful self expression). He paints from the Kernal, which is what Bengal people have no notion of and which is the only way to paint soundly).⁶⁰ During first half of the twentieth century of the number of painters who remained independent of Bengal school Rabindranath Tagore, and Amrita Sher-Gil were prominent and outstanding. These two leading artists were great pioneers of Indian modernism, which they backed up with their exceptionally richened creative imagination. Amrita Sher-Gil who integrated the pictorial idiom of the west and an Indian vision, and Rabindranath Tagore who demanded for paintings music's autonomy and independence from factuality and thus gave a charter for free variations on naturalism, abstraction and expressionism.⁶¹

Amrita's painting exhibition in Hungary held on London, 7, September. The Hungarian foreign Minister, Mr. Janos Marlonyi, and India's Ambassador, Ms Lakshmi M.Puri, inaugurated the exhibition, which has aroused considerable interest in Budapest because of Sher-gill's Hungarian links has been set up under the cultural exchange programmed between India and Hungary exhibits loaned by the National Gallery of modern art, New Delhi.⁶² There are some another important paintings, which are kept at national Gallery of modern Art, New Delhi.

- 1) Girl in Field.1932
- 2) Boat.1934
- 3) Klara Szepessy, 1934
- 4) My Grandmother, 1938
- 5) Potato Peeler, 1938
- 6) Hungarian Markets Scene 1938

⁶⁰ H. Geotz: *Art of the World, Indian Art through The Ages*, Publication Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Old Secretariat, Delhi, 1950, p.4.

⁶¹ <http://in.geocities.com/cyberisaac2002/kerala.html>

⁶² <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/0908/stories/03089.html>.

- 7) Nude.1938
- 8) Hungarian Peasant 1939
- 9) The Merry Cemetery 1939
- 10) Winter, 1939.IInd

II Mr.Sundram, NewDelhi

- 11) Hungarian Village Church.1932
- 12) Two Girls, 1939 I

III Mrs. Erno Gottesmann, born Viola Eagan, Budapest

- 13) Portrait of Victor Eagan.1933
- 14) Self-Portrait, 1932

The Hungarian village Church, (1932) shows a two-steepled church. The surrounding is the greyish, stormy sky. From this luring background rises the view of the church with its white walls and red steeples. Amrita was inspired by the charge of Zebegeny while doing this canvas.

Boat -1934:

Boat, 1934 The deep and unusually broad boat without hoars is rolling on the water reproducing the different tones of the green colours.

The Potato Peeler, (1938):

The Potato Peeler, 1938 depicts a women dressed in a black or dark - blue striped garment sitting in front of a greenish background. She is peeling a piece of potato with knife.

The Hungarian Market Scene:

The Hungarian Market Scene .1938, in NGMA is her most well know canvas. A village Church in the background, a market place with little figures in black, the sky gray and the church Tower white. Rather Breughelesque.

Hungarian Peasant, 1939:

The painting represents with sun-dried face and hands. He is wearing a greenish shirt and his eyes are also greenish even the white of the eye.

Winter, 1939:

The painting shows a snow-covered Hungarian landscape, the monotonous whiteness of which is broken only by the leafless trees and pole supporting electric wires.⁶³ These are the important painting, which is show Amrita's great art. The recent sale of Amrita painting (village scene, 1938) she probably could not sell for a paltry Rs.250 during her lifetime was snapped up at OSIANS auction in Delhi for a whopping Rs.7 crore, the highest price ever paid for a painting in India testing to the growing value placed on her work.⁶⁴ Village scene captures the grace and beauty she saw in their humdrums lives, the colours, form and composition she instilled into quotidian rural scene. The paintings also shows the different artistic traditions, both foreign and Indian, from which she drew inspirations the highest price ever paid for a painting in India testifies to growing value placed on her work.⁶⁵ So we can say that her stylistic implications and colours harmoniously introduced a new trend in India painting. In the history of modern Indian art was the appearance in the mid thirties of Amrita Shergill with whose paintings contemporary painting in India look shape a contemporary style and expression that were, at the same line of the soul and in direct continuation of great national past. And today Amrita Sher-Gil is the best-known woman painter of India despite her death at a very young age she made name for herself on the international art scene and is considered a pioneer of modern Indian painting.

⁶³ Ibid .pp.21- 25.(*Amrita Shergill and Hungarian*)

⁶⁴ *India Today*: 27 March, 2006, p. 83.

⁶⁵ *Out Look*: March, 20, 2006, p. 74.

Asit Kumar Haldar:

Asit Kumar Haldar, the renowned artist and pioneer of the Renaissance school of Indian painting. And potentially principle dealing with the important episodes in India's long History of several millenniums from the dawn of civilization in the Indus valley.⁶⁶ Besides, being a poet artist he was also an art critic of high order. He has so many specialties as he was a philosopher also.⁶⁷ Asit Kumar Haldar was born in Joransanko, a great nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. From an early age he showed an aptitude for drawing and joined the Government Art School in Calcutta when he was still a young boy in 1906 at the age of 14.⁶⁸ As a distinguished pupil of the master, Abanindranath Tagore, he came into close contact with Ananda Coomaraswamy and E.V.Havell. His genius stood out even in the company of such out standing artists as Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Ganguly and Kshitindaranath Majumdar and his talent flowed forth without any limitations. The vast range of his oeuvres reveals a mind that was keenly aware of both the oriental and occidental concepts of art.⁶⁹

He was a sculptur and a craft man of consummate skill as the sculpture Haldar received his education from two famous artists of Bengal, Jadu Pal and Bakes war pal of *Krishna Nagar* in 1905 and Later received training from Leonwd Jennings. The Indian society in London sponsored a visited to the Ajanta caves for the purpose of copying the fresco so there; Asit Kumar and copying a number of other students, under the guidance of Hungarian, went there twice. For the period 1911 to 1915, he was an art teacher at the *Santiniketan vidyalaya*. After spending a few years copying *jogimara*, and Bagh cave painting and teaching at the Government Art College, he returned to *Santiniketan*. During his Stay in *Santiniketan* he acted in most of the plays by

⁶⁶ Asit. K. H., Dr. Shampur Nanand, Dr. Radha Kumar Mukharje: *Culture At A Glance Text and Thirty Illustration*, Lucknow, 1996, p.1.

⁶⁷ <http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in/Greatmaster/Contents/Ashithalder.htm>

⁶⁸ <http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/H0030.html>

⁶⁹ *Roopa Lekha*, J. of All India Fine Arts and Craft Society, Raj Marg, Vol. xxiv, 1&2, 28March, 1997, New Delhi, p.60.

Rabindranath they were stayed. He designed sets and illustrated a limit edition of *Gitanjali*.⁷⁰

Asit Kumar Haldar was instrumental in helping Rabindranath Tagore in establishing *Kala Bhavan* in *Santiniketan*. He was the principal of *Kala Bhavan* between the years 1911 and 1923 and helped Tagore in promoting cultural activities. He introduced ritualistic Alpana designs as a decorative device in social and ceremonial occasions at *Santiniketan*. During this period he disseminated his own ideas about art and inspired several students like Mukul Chandra Day, Ramendra Nath Chakervarti, Direndra Krishna Dev Barman, Vinod Bihari Mukherjee and others.⁷¹

In 1923, he went on a study tour through England, France and Germany.⁷² During his tour abroad in 1923 Haldar realised that the European method of rendering objects realistically suffered from considerable limitation.⁷³ On his return, he became the principal of the Maharaja's school of Arts and crafts. Jaunpur, where he remained for a year before moving to the Maharaja's School of Arts and craft in Lucknow, which he built up along with Blreshwasen and later, became its principal. Haldar has applied his brush in almost intruder fields of artistic creation, but his mastery of technique has enabled him to sub due the intractable material to his own artistic purpose. Rabindranath Tagore has said of Haldar in a letter to him "you are not merely a painter but also a poet. Thus your brush pours on both the 'rasas' and when the poet desires a painting he has to fall back on you".⁷⁴

The talent of Asit Kumar Haldar inclines towards the romantic, but his technical competence is unequal to his sensibility. While his pictures are informed by a rhythmical movement and subtlety of line, they are only limitedly significant as architectural forms. His basic impulsion, the heritage of

⁷⁰ <http://www.visva-bharti.ac.in/GreatMaster/contents/ashithalder.html>

⁷¹ <http://banglapidia.search.com.bd/hltp003.html>

⁷² <http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/asitkumarhalder.html>

⁷³ <http://banglapidiasearch.com.bd/hltp0030.html>

⁷⁴ Ibid p.1. Culture (*At A Glance, Text and Thirty Illustrations*)

classical Indian painting, induced an early stream of mythological and idyllic pieces, but their pictorial import was only secondary to their emotional appeal. Same paragraph p28 His early output was heavily accented in the manner of the Bengal school, with allegorical content: a picture of a forlorn mendicant, in the darkening gloom of a setting sun, is labelled "His Heritage", while in the "Old and the New" and in the "Cycle of spring", withered old and budding childhood are contrasted with too obvious effects; a desolate mother, condemned to an inglorious life draws to her bosom a hapless infant in "Fallen on Evil Days" and a sinuous woman, half- obscured by an enveloping cloud, personifies "Nature Mysterious". These efforts at transparent or laboured symbolism are of little consequence aesthetically; as organisation of significant forms they are jejune. Nor are his mythological pieces inspired by exalted formal or emotive conceptions; his "Hara Parvati" is a singularly drab performance, marred by in different drawing, and his "Kacha and Devayani", provoking an immediate comparison with Abanindranath Tagore's famous fresco on the same theme, is definitely the poorer picture. As an example of his linear and schematic qualities, his early "Baul" is symptomatic of his aspiring imagination, which falls short of adequate pictorial expression.⁷⁵

He was a fine writer and wrote excellent poetry a focally rare in a painter and which contributed greatly to the richness and imagination of his pictorial representation of the "Rubayat" of Omar Khayyam. His great uncle, the poet Rabindranath was one of the first to descend poetic genius of his nephew and complimented him again and again on the beauty of his verses.⁷⁶ In some of his earliest and best works mostly big pencils are the collection of Mr. Debendranath Tagore of Calcutta. In early style of his career he made so many copies of the paintings at *Ajanta*, *Bagh* and *Jogimara* using tempera oil or watercolours, which ever suited to the as his medium. Requirement. In process

⁷⁵ D.R. Rama Chandra Rao: *Modern Indian Painting*, Rachana Bhimarena Gardens Modern Indian, 1953, p. 17.

⁷⁶ *Roopa Lekha*: J. of All India Fine Arts and Craft Society, Raj Marg, Vol.xxxiv, 1&2, 28 March, 1972, New Delhi, p.60.

he also discovered a special technique lacquered painting on wood also known as lacsit.⁷⁷ *Ajanta* copied with the artist's own lyrical nature and romantic feeling. "The Flame of Music" was one of his creative masterpieces. He has immortalized of the samples, their folk dance and their simple beauty in his many several of "*Rasleela*" and *Rairaja*' which aghai show the lyrical sweetness of his composition. *Kirshna* and his compositions are seen here engaged in entertaining Radha who is seated on a Charpai, with a half glowing joy, attended by her maids. The dancing figure of *Krishna* with his flute and his drum beating companions are drawn with power and vitality, there is why then and movement in every one of their steps the alter simplicity of this painting is compelling. Of equal merit and of the same techniques and style are his other companion pictures "Keenala", "The blind son of Asoka" and "Rama Guha" both sub line in their simplicity of pictorial story telling. The tragedy of the one is as much touching as the devotion of the other. His "Moon and Lotus" is after the Japanese style, and in this kind of art he was quite at home. His sensitive studies of Umar Khayyam in delicately tented colours drawing are as good as those of Tagore's and certainly superior to most of the various one seen in European art.⁷⁸ Haldar also made thirty paintings on the Buddha's life and thirty paintings on episodes from in his paintings the physical attribute of his objects were treated in accordance to the subject matter. Haldar's *Yashoda* and *Kirshna* was not merely a religious painting. It is a representation of the infinity as represented by Krishna and its interaction with the finite world as represented by *Yashoda*. Indian History conveying values and ideas and not mere events.⁷⁹ His books on art, translation of Sanskrit classes, his poems songs and essays bear evidence of his versatility. He was the first Indian to be elected Fellow of the Royal Society of arts, London. In his book *Ravitirth* he has acknowledge his debt to Rabindranath Tagore and *Santiniketan* in helping to establish him as an artist. During his stay in *Santiniketan* he also

⁷⁷ Tomory: *A History of Fine Arts in India and West*, Oriental Longman Ltd. India, 1989, p.280.

⁷⁸ G. Venkata Chalam: *Contemporary Indian Painter's* Nalanda Publication Bombay 1948, pp.66-67.

⁷⁹ [http:// banglapidia search.com bd/hltp003.html](http://banglapidia.search.com.bd/hltp003.html)

acted in most of the plays by Rabindranath that were staged.⁸⁰ So his art is not an abstruse expression of inarticulate pattern, it is a value-laden narrative; speaking its inner meaning to the observer. In this respect, Haldar's art is like a seer's or a poet's vision, which enriches the soul, inspires the mind and ennobles the ignoble. Rabindranath Tagore often found inspiration from the themes of Haldar's sensitive brush drawings of lyrical scenes from village life, while composing his immortal songs.⁸¹ Through the early part of his career he was associated with the Indian Society of originate art the held his first solo show then exhibited with them in other Indian cities and at the festival of empire at the crystal place (1911), In Indian art. 1914, the American Federation of Art.⁸² Asit Kumar Haldar died in Lucknow on 13 February 1964. His death brings to close a glorious nostalgic chapter of empty of Indian art.

⁸⁰ [http:// www. visva-bharti.ac.in/GreatMaster.contents/Ashithalder.html](http://www.visva-bharti.ac.in/GreatMaster.contents/Ashithalder.html).

⁸¹ <http://www.sanat.in/artist/techer.php>

⁸² [http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/asitkumar Halder.html](http://www.contemporaryindianart.com/asitkumar%20Halder.html)

Conclusion

Indian art is not something remote from people. It forms an integral part of several manifestations, which in its totality, represents the spiritual life of the Indians. As an observer of nature, the Indian artists discovered certain unities and similarities between themselves and the outer world. Not content with this shadow of resemblance they perused their studies further and found in nature their own self at places magnified in scale and at others modified in form. Coming accidentally upon the great truth that all vibration signified a true sign of life, the Indian artist began to regard nature as a great repository of life and energy and himself as its biggest recipient. This discovery appears to be the origin of the artistic personification of nature in human form. But unlike Greeks, the Indian creative thinkers and artists have always addressed themselves more to the contemplative phases of the human mind than the physical form. It is, therefore, natural to come across in the creations of Indian artists a faithful representation of their subjective ideals rather than the photographic reproduction of forms.

A close study of Rabindranath's works convinces that his approach to art is primarily founded his intuitive understanding of it and his personal experiences as the practitioner of varied art forms. But it does not imply that he did not learn anything from his illustrious predecessors and contemporaries. Same Western and Indian influences on him are quite conspicuous.

In his effort to understand the true traditions of Indian art and the method the old artist adopted to get their inspiration, he had gone through the Indian Epics and carefully studied the objects of art co-relating the idea with the reproductions. Thus, through his constant and persistent efforts, he was able to realize the truth. The road he traversed was full of pitfall and was not easy going.

"The strange phenomenon of the poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore suddenly becoming a painter at the age of sixty seven surprised many

people, confused many more, and delighted a few. That a great writer when was the national poet of his country, almost a classical in his own life time, should produce some meaningless drawing and paintings, with the bloom of innocence on then, was certainly shocking to a generation that had no time think or feel, except about national freedom". And, when these very same pictures were pronounced to be highly significant by discerning critics in Europe, the whole situation seemed bewildering.

The painting of Rabindranath did not conform to any of the known categories of art when he unexpectedly started work in 1928. His art is related to 'play' or spontaneous activity and also to remember that he was a versatile genius, a master in literature and music form.

He first began to draw, traced to the doodles and deletions he made while writing verse. He had a naturally beautiful handwriting, that possessed rhythmic and fine character. He arranged his lines on a page in an unconscious pattern. Often he crossed and lines or words not required and joined these together in an abstract pattern. These figurations did not represent anything but they soon came to have rhythm animation, texture and other qualities of art and little details such as eyes, beaks, tails that related them to life.

His work progresses from pen drawings to pen with transparent inks put on with rag or finger and only lastly with brush. Lack of finish is part of their quality and the discrepancy between formed executions inserts an element of pathos into the form itself. This tentativeness is confirmed by the fact the Rabindranath Tagore did not name his picture. They are self-explanatory.

Rabindranath is also an early innovator with textures in this modern sense of textures with paint. He super imposed coloured ink sometimes in washes, at others in broken strokes. The transparent inks laid one over another often created a rich palette. His range of colours favors the deep yellows. The handling of this medium produces of its own and interest in the surface of the painting.

Tagore's art is important in announcing new freedom to the artist. He was able to abandon all formal limitations because he was not a professional painter. The steps taken by Klee and Kandinsky are echoed unconsciously in his work. His unrestrained creations gave painting a new autonomy. It is strange that he had no immediate followers. The artists of his times may have believed it was only he who could claim such liberty, being already accepted as a great poet: perhaps they did not have the taste to accept the style the vision to foresee its possibilities.

His paintings have more or less the same quality as his drawing an air being done on the spree of the moment, awakening a new sincerity, which ruthlessly eliminates all that is superfluous. His numerous paintings of the period disclosed new aspects in the appearance of things. The artist showed for the first time an inclination, which continued throughout his later work except for a few momentary lapses, to integrate lines, gestures and rhythm with colour. An abstract feeling for pure colour was also seen emerging in his creativity.

He wrote one article, "What is art"? seriously and directly on the subjects, and even it does not reveal his acquaintance with all the relevant and significant material on the subject. As a matter of fact, he was primarily a creative artist, and wrote an art usually in a casual manner, probably to make his understanding and vision of art clear and well defined. Tagore's definition of art as "the repose of man's creative soul to the Real" is in reality, philosophical and spiritual in its essence.

Europeans like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and D.H. Lawrence readily endorse Tagore's definition. Infact, this attempt to define art is fundamentally Indian; in India all great art is steeped in religion, God and spiritually from time immemorial. In every art and thought of Indian soil, one clearly finds the religious or spiritual inspiration.

E.B. Havell also greatly contributed to the achievements of the Bengal school. It is no wonder that Havell upheld the tradition of idealistic writings and out look of life and art. The idealism and spiritualism, which he propagated vehemently, attracted the attention of the educated elite quite naturally. While searching for pure aesthetics in Indian art, Havell over looked the humanitarian elements, which are expressed, in traditional folk-art of India. But he argued in favour of the high design values of Indian craft and sought to reinstate it in the curriculum of the art school at Calcutta. That he re-vitalised the curricula of Indian art and its teaching methods, and, making a clean sweep of third-rate Western exhibited furnished the galleries under his care with magnificent collections of Indian painting and sculpture will remain to his lasting credit.

In many ways the trends begun or invented by Abanindranath Tagore are typical of the 19th century. The Bengal school was largely moulded by the personal style of its originator, at, and by his genius and temperament. This contribution to the field art is also inspiral and everlasting. Abanindranath was a born artist. Tagore's life has been too deeply introspective in its utmost sense, motive and achievements. In his work, a challenging control is manifested over matter, and the transformative power of his super mind gines the mass a shape which is beyond the comprehension of ordinary individuals. Initiated into the secrets of existence the evolutionary has been fused with revolutionary in Abanindranath. This master of Indian art has constantly been amplifying the significance, enriching the expression, extending the symbolism, catching and reproducing more and more intensely the vision of the higher planes of existence and consciousness to witch we ordinary mortals have little or no access.

Abanindranath's staunch belief that painting should never be isolated from other fine arts like singing, dancing, acting and writing. He always urged

his student to express themselves in as many ways as possible. He often used to say that in order to be a true artist, one should be a poet, a dancer, and singer, for other wise he could not realize the true artistic ecstasy. For 1920 when he was picking up the various techniques of paintings and teaching his students to a new school of paintings in 1930. So in end we can say that his art like the universal cosmic sweeps takes within its space all human life and human thought bringing with it the working of the hidden world of gods.

Tagore reiterates his belief in the trinity of beauty, truth and joy as incarnated in art. Rabindranath Tagore, besides being one of the greatest lyric poets of all times, was a great social thinker and a mass communicator. As a great social reformer and patriot he joined, rather gave a lead to the contemporary social thinking on problems of national and international interest. They were thought provoking but their readership was restricted only to a few million Bengalis. They are a happy blending of Hindu-Muslim philosophies. They represent the highest thoughts of renunciations of material things of life.

He was a pioneer in the field of education for the last forty years of his life. He was content to be a schoolmaster in humble achieved fame such as not Indian had known before. He was the first in India, to think for himself and put in practice principles of education, which have now become places of educational theory, if not yet practice.

On education, "Tagore realisesd very clearly that education as it now stand is primarily an education on the verbal level, on the level of concepts, and that the non-verbal side of man, the whole physiological, emotional, imaginative, non rational side of human beings was left almost completely uneducated. At *Santiniketan* he set out to make the best of both the worlds".

Reflection on Rabindranath Tagore, Aldous Huxley, Indian Literature, Vol.4, 1961

Rabindranath was not directly connected with any political movement. His heart rose against the bond of slavery. On many occasions Rabindranath joined the processions that carried the national flag and lodged his protest against British rule. Rabindranath inspired young India not to yield to Cruzan's blandishments.

In the middle of 1904 there was a mammoth meeting in Calcutta. Tagore asked the national leaders to concentrate their energy on the development of rural India. He said, "The care of India lies in her villages. The problems of the villages are the problems of India. India will progress only when you can bring new life to these villages".

Tagore wrote passionately on Indian Culture. He compared Indian culture to a river in which many streams have joined. Tagore stresses the need of coordinating the study of different cultures, "the *Vedic*, the *Puranic*, the Buddhist, the Jain, the *Islamic* the Sikh and the Zoroastrian. And side by side with them the European-for only then shall we be able to assimilate it. A river flowing banks is truly own, but ones relations with a flood are fraught with disaster".

Tagore was a great sensitive and creative poet. The sorrow of heart and emotion are found in his poetry. He executes the real picture of emotion when we listen to his songs and poems. They revealed inerasable stamp on the heart of the listeners. His poems inspired millions of Indian's to fight the alien rulers. It was a fight, which the pen waged against the sword, and ultimately it was the pen that triumphed. India has been proud to have her notational anthem "*Jana Gana Mana*" composed by this greatest poet of the century.

In *Geetanjali* the subjects of his poetry are adopted from our day-to-day life. The language of these poems is *Taksali* and has artificial simple emotion, but these poems have hidden penetrating effect on the hearts of readers; that can't be explained in words. The language of these poems; are simple and every body understood easily.

Rabindranath Tagore's letters also possess a socialistic spirit. Through these letters he highlighted the evils of societies. His letters are fascinating because his letter areas were abroad. So he had his friends not only in India also outside India.

In our Fourth Chapter, we tried to discuss that Rabindranath's art as a child art and about his views on aesthetics. His paintings are child-like or it can be said his paintings resemble those of children. Because he had no regular training in the field of painting, he says himself, "when at eight he drew paintings by inspiration of his nephew Abanindranath and Gaganendranath". This is because there is no traditional or prejudiced effect in his art. Tagore was a lover of rhythm. Rhythm was the life force of all his works. Tagore was guided by his keen sense of rhythm in almost all his works, whether composing poems, songs and his drawing pictures. Our endeavor was to highlight the salient features of his aesthetics. A scrutiny of Tagore's aesthetics explicitly reveals his belief that art is not a social product. That is, it is not the consequence of socio-economic factors or utilitarian considerations. Nor has it causation or what he labels 'historicity'. Though a creation of a person, it is free from its genesis, it has little history, and enjoys a lot of independence. This is the reason why there is such a bewildering and puzzling variety and diversity of art the entire world over in every age and country. In this view of art, he does not seem very sound, and many may differ from him. But he has his firm conviction in it and grants autonomy to art experience, discarding any deterministic dogma, old or new.

The various elements and aspects of Tagore's aesthetic theory also lead us to infer that art, according to him, does not have a definite, clear aim or purpose. The reason is that art is creation, and just as the aim of creation baffles us, so does art. He indubitably offers us a fairly profound and elaborate aesthetic theory, though; he does not write about art and literature with deliberate intention of a writer of aesthetics. Much of the finest of the Indian and western aesthetics has been retouched and modernized by him, and to this

he has contributed considerably emotions as the source of art, he evinces affinity with inimitable English Romantic poet, William Wordsworth.

Inevitably, his well thought, out and coherent ideas on the subject are a landmark in the history of aesthetics. In a word, Tagore's aesthetic philosophy assimilates the best of Indian and western aesthetics, shows a clear stamp of originality, and is thus absolutely indispensable for an adequate understanding and appreciation of art and literature, both old and new, and both Indian and Western.

There are three painters who are attached Rabindranath's personality. They were much very impressed of his art then the poetry. Rabindranath painting should have been initially dismay the experience when they did see the works of Tagore art. These are Nand Lal Bose, Asit Kumar Halder and Amrita Sher-Gil. Nandlal had a great respect for the Indian tradition, he was not a mere copyist as has often been supposed. Nandlal was aware that the Indian tradition has never been and is not static; like a river it is ever old and ever new, continuous, satisfying and fertile.

Amrita Sher-Gil's loves for Indian people deserve appreciation. This attachment we can see in her paintings. Because she painted simple and poor people of rural Indian from whom she was completely alienated; the hill men and women of Simla, the villagers from South India, the peasant of Punjab and Northern Uttar Pradesh.

So, Rabindranath is very relevant today to India because his personality has multifaceted aspects that can provide a source of inspiration to our generation. For which he was a great artist poet, composer, short story writer, novelist play right and painter he was a thinker. Who wrote innumerable articles and delivered lectures and addresses, an educationist a practical one who founded and ran institutions like *Santiniketan* and *Visva-Bharti*. He was also a social worker who alongside *Santiniketan* organized cooperatives, the *Sriniketan* and a center for study of rural work and development. And he never hesitated to intervene in the political turmoil of India when it came to a head

and demanded his attention. We should remember Rabindranath Tagore today who abhors religious bigotry. It end and similarly nobody is inferian to us the world is a communication of equals. Though the world and India have changed considerably since the days of Tagore, they have not changed wholly. In many fundamental respects the world as a whole and India remain the same way his ideas and vision have not lost their relevance even today. We feel proud of having such great personalities like Gandhi, Sir Syed, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iqbal and Tagore on our land where mutual love, brotherhood and understanding pave its way for all those who believe and practice such supreme values and ideals and with their creative efforts contributed much for humanity at large.

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List of Plates



Plate -1
Colour C-1930
The Tender on the Stony
Hard



Plate -2
Colour
Size: 28 x 20 cm



Plate -3

Ink and crayon on paper

Size: 25.5x35.5cm



Plate -4

Size: 11.8.5 inch



Plate -5
Ink on paper
Size: 50x29.5cm

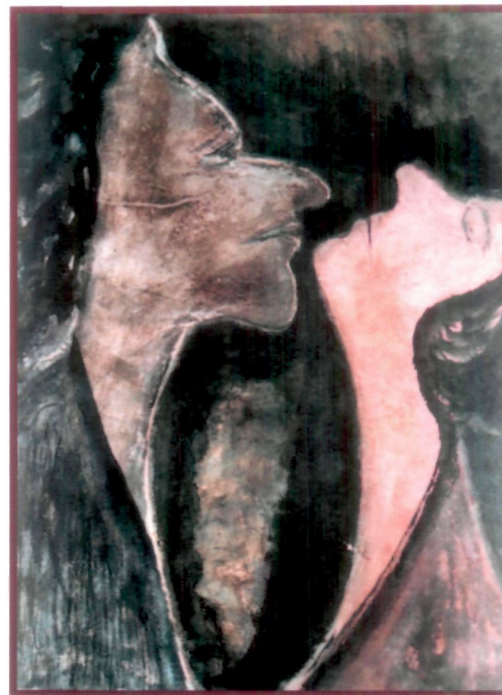


Plate -6
Ink and water colour
Size: 21.3x28.3cm
Beseeching
c.1928 - c.1930



Plate -7
Ink on paper
Size: 48x24cm



Plate -8
Ink and water colour
Size: 49.5x25.4cm

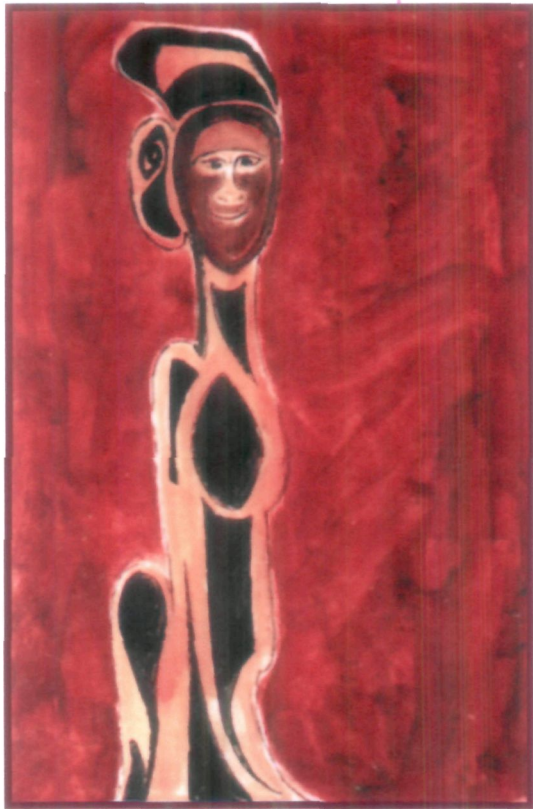


Plate -9
Ink on paper
Size: 21.3x28.3cm



Plate -10
Size: 24.9x36.1cm



Plate -11
Size: 5.2.2x38cm



Plate -12



Plate -13
Ink and water colour on paper
Size: 5.2.2x38cm



Plate -14
Ink on paper
Size: 9.4x13.4cm



Plate -15
Ink on paper
Size: 45x61cm



Plate -16
Ink on paper
Size: 31.5x38.5cm

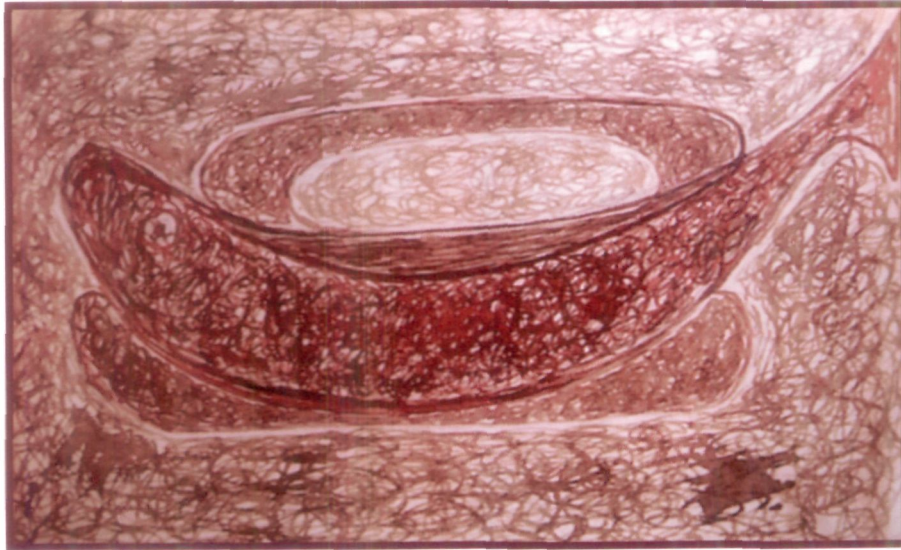


Plate -17
Coloured Ink S/d/2/1134



Plate -18
Size: 17.7x20.5 cm



Plate -19
Size: 17.7x20.5 cm



Plate -20
Size: 33.6x21cm



Plate -21
Dancer



Plate -22
Dancer



Plate -23
Colour, s/d, 1-10-34



Plate -24
Vield women
c.1938-1930



Plate -25
Ink and water colour on paper
Size: 18.8x33cm



Plate -26
Self-Portrait

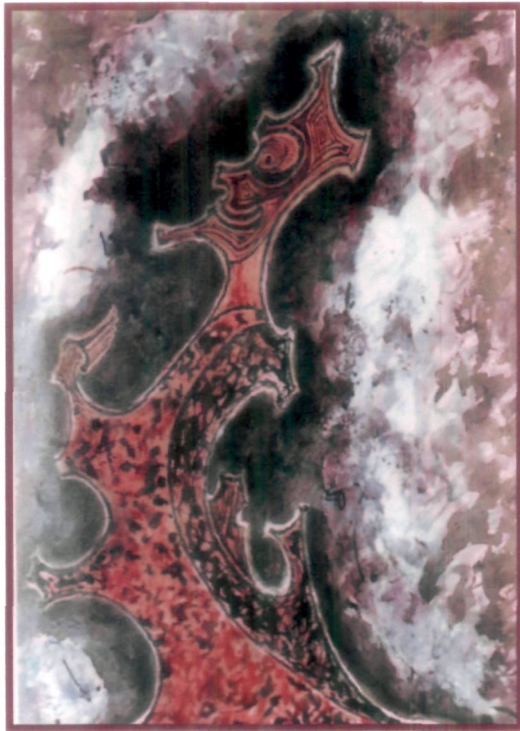


Plate -27

Ink on paper

Size: 50.8x54cm



Plate -28

Size: 4.11x8.5 cm



Plate -29
Female head, Calours
Size: 1.9x3.4 cm

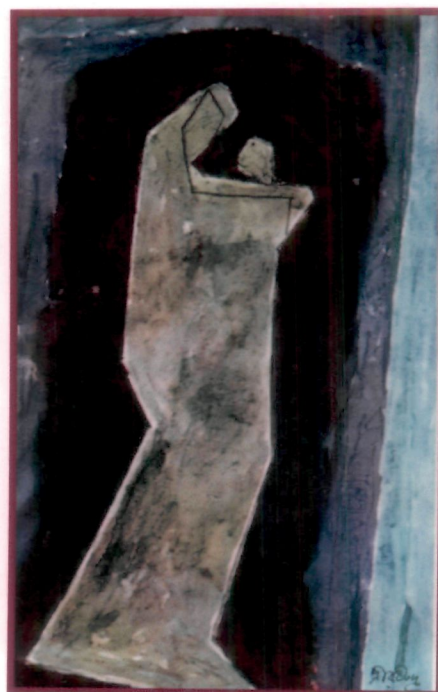


Plate -30
Mother and Child



Plate -31
Size: 25.3 x 40.5 cm



Plate -32
Ink on paper
Size: 50x 29.5 cm



Plate -33
Standing Lady Water colour and
Body colour 7.25x5 inch



Plate -34
Untitled Painting



Plate -35
Untitled, Woman drawing



Plate -36
Woman drawing



Plate -37
Laughing face



Plate -38
Pencil Sketch



Plate -39
Water Colour and ink
17x10 inch

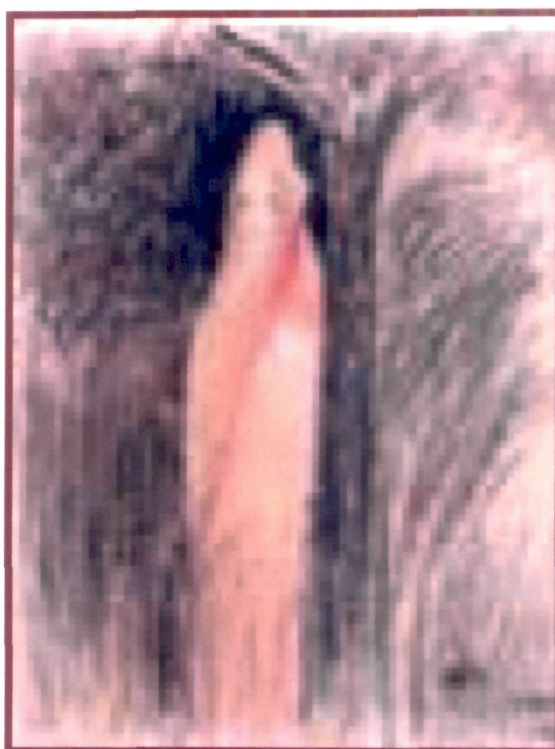


Plate -40
Waiting 1941, water colour and
ink 83, 14x7 inch



Plate -41

*Max peckstein, zwiesprache,
coloured woodcut, 1920*



Plate -42

*Vase, 1928-29, pen and ink on
paper 11x8 1/4 inches*



Plate -43
Water proof ink and pen ink on
paper



Plate -44
Geometric abstract, 1934, water
colour and ink 12 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches



Plate -45
Untitled



Plate -46
Dancing Girl an undated ink-on-
paper piece



Plate -47
Self potrait

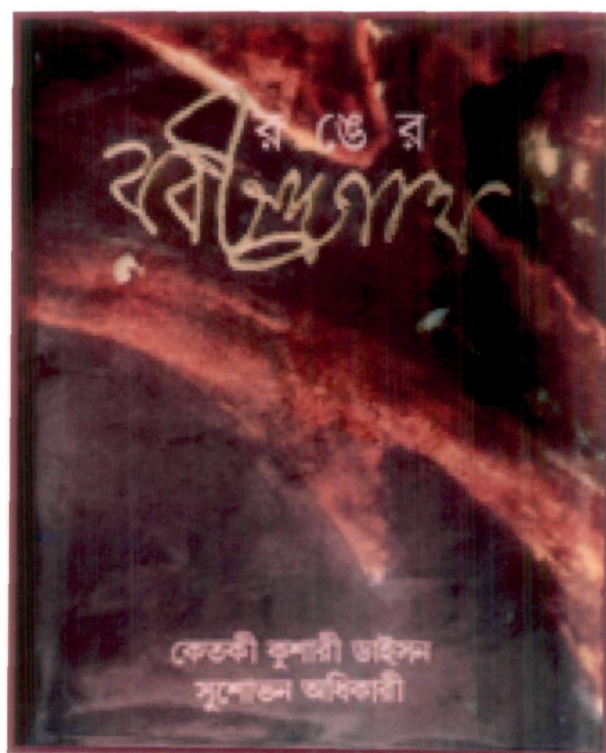


Plate -48
Untitled



Plate -49
Untitled Painting



Plate -50
Post Card

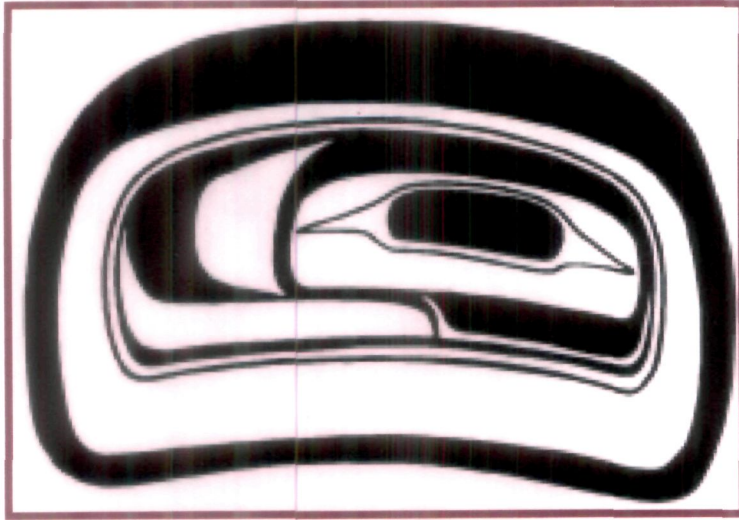


Plate -51
The salmon- trout head motif of
Haida Art



Plate -52
Ra - Tha, Seal



Plate -53
RT_pKetaki1_Girchner



Plate -54
RT_pKetaki1_161915



Plate -55
Malanggan artefact, mask,
Boars Head



Plate -56
135px-
collection_2155_pastel_mask

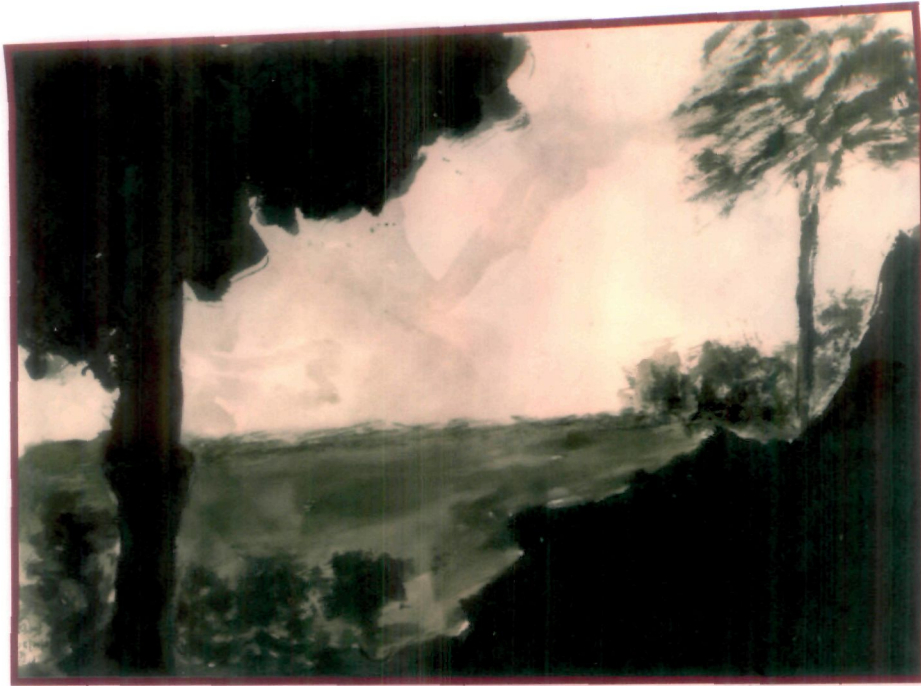


Plate -57
Ink and poster colour paper
Size: 66.5x49cm



Plate -58
Landscape, 1935 Pen & Ink
63/4x83x/4 inches



Plate -59
Landscape



Plate -60
Trees, Ink

List of Paintings

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|
| 1 | T Colour, C.1930.
The Tender on the Stony Hard | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 2 | Rabindranath Tagore Colour.
S/d 1-6-33.
Size: 28cm x 20 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 3 | Female head in The later style.
25.5X 35.5cm
Dated Lahore, 22-2-35 ink and Crayon on Paper | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 4 | Size: 11.8.5 inch | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 5 | Signed 'Rabindra in Bengali
Mother and Child, Colour, C.1930.
No Date. Ink on paper
.50 x 29.5 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 6 | Besceching.c.1928-c.1930
Ink and Water Col our on Paper.
21.3 X 28.3 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 7 | Signed 'Sri Rabindra' in Bengali
No Date. Ink on paper
48 x 24 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 8 | Unsigned 'Rabindra' in Bengali
No Date. Ink and water colour on paper.
49.5 x 25.4cm x 20.4 cm | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 9 | Ink on Paper
Size: 21.3x 28.3 cm | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 10 | Signed 'Rabindra' in Bengali
Dated 3 Agrahayan 1314 (1934)
24.9 x 36.1cm Rabindra Bharti | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 11 | Size: 52.2 cm x 38 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |
| 12 | Plate 12 Untitled
Signed 'Rabindra in Bengali
Date. Baghdad 12.5.1932.
Ink and Water Col our on Paper
20.2 x 25.1 cm. | Rabindranath Tagore |

13	Figures at the window. Ink on Paper 9.4 x 13.4.” (24 x 34cm)	Rabindranath Tagore
14	Agonized Cry No Date. Ink on paper 45 x 61 cm RB Acc	Rabindranath Tagore
15	Signed ‘Rabindra’ in Bengali No Date. Ink on paper 31.5 x 38.5 cm.	Rabindranath Tagore
16	Still life with fish Coloured Ink, s/d/2/1134	Rabindranath Tagore
17	Rabindranath Tagore Still life with fish Size: 17.7 Cm X 20.5 Cm.	Rabindranath Tagore
18	17.7 x 20.5	Rabindranath Tagore
19	33.6 x 21	Rabindranath Tagore
20	Signed ‘Rabindra’ in Bengali No Date. Ink on paper 25 x 20.4 cm. Colour, C.1430.	Rabindranath Tagore
21	Dancing Girl An undated Ink on paper	Rabindranath Tagore
22	Dancing Girl	Rabindranath Tagore
23	Colour, s/d 1.10.34	Rabindranath Tagore
24	Vield Women C.1920 – C.1950	Rabindranath Tagore
25	Self portrait Ink and water colour on paper Size: 18.8x33cm	Rabindranath Tagore
26	Self-Portrait	Rabindranath Tagore
27	Ink on paper Size: 50.8x54cm	Rabindranath Tagore
28	Size: 4.11x8.5 cm	Rabindranath Tagore
29	Female head, Calours Size: 1.9x3.4 cm	Rabindranath Tagore

30	Mother and Child	Rabindranath Tagore
31	Size: 25.3 x 40.5 cm	Rabindranath Tagore
32	Ink on paper Size: 50x 29.5 cm	Rabindranath Tagore
33	Standing Lady Water colour and Body colour 7.25x5 inch	Rabindranath Tagore
34	Untitled Painting	Rabindranath Tagore
35	Untitled, Woman drawing	Rabindranath Tagore
36	Woman drawing	Rabindranath Tagore
37	Laughing face	Rabindranath Tagore
38	Pencil Sketch	Rabindranath Tagore
39	Water Colour and ink 17x10 inch	Rabindranath Tagore
40	Waiting 1941, water colour and ink 83, 14x7 inch	Rabindranath Tagore
41	Max pechstein, zwiesprache, coloured woodcut, 1920	Rabindranath Tagore
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48	Untitled	Rabindranath Tagore
49	Untitled Painting	Rabindranath Tagore
50	Post Card	Rabindranath Tagore
51	The salmon- trout head motif of Haida Art	Rabindranath Tagore
52	Ra - Tha, Wood Seal	Rabindranath Tagore
53	RT_pKetakil_kirchner	Rabindranath Tagore
54	RT_pKetakil_rb1915	Rabindranath Tagore
55	Malanggan artefact, mask, boars head	Rabindranath Tagore
56	135px-collection_2155_pastel_mask	Rabindranath Tagore
57	Ink and poster colour paper Size: 66.5x49cm	Rabindranath Tagore
58	Landscape, 1935 Pen & Ink 63/4x83x/4 inches	Rabindranath Tagore
59	Landscape	Rabindranath Tagore
60	Trees, Ink	Rabindranath Tagore

CHAIRMAN

DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS



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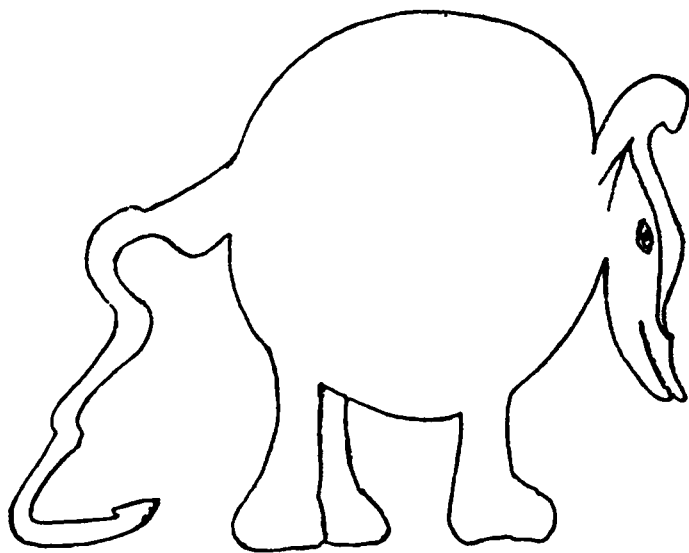
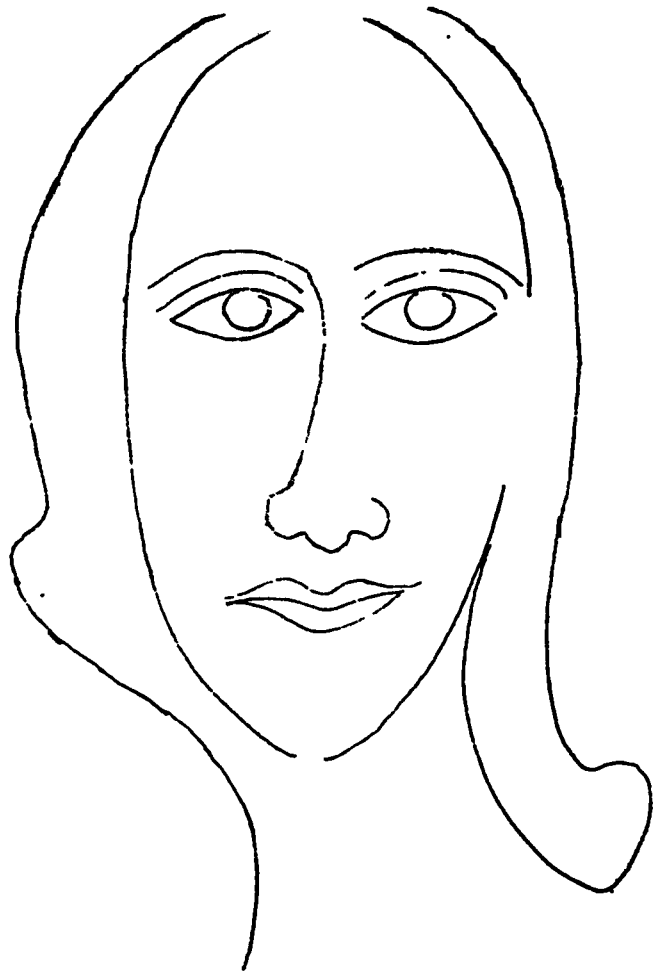
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

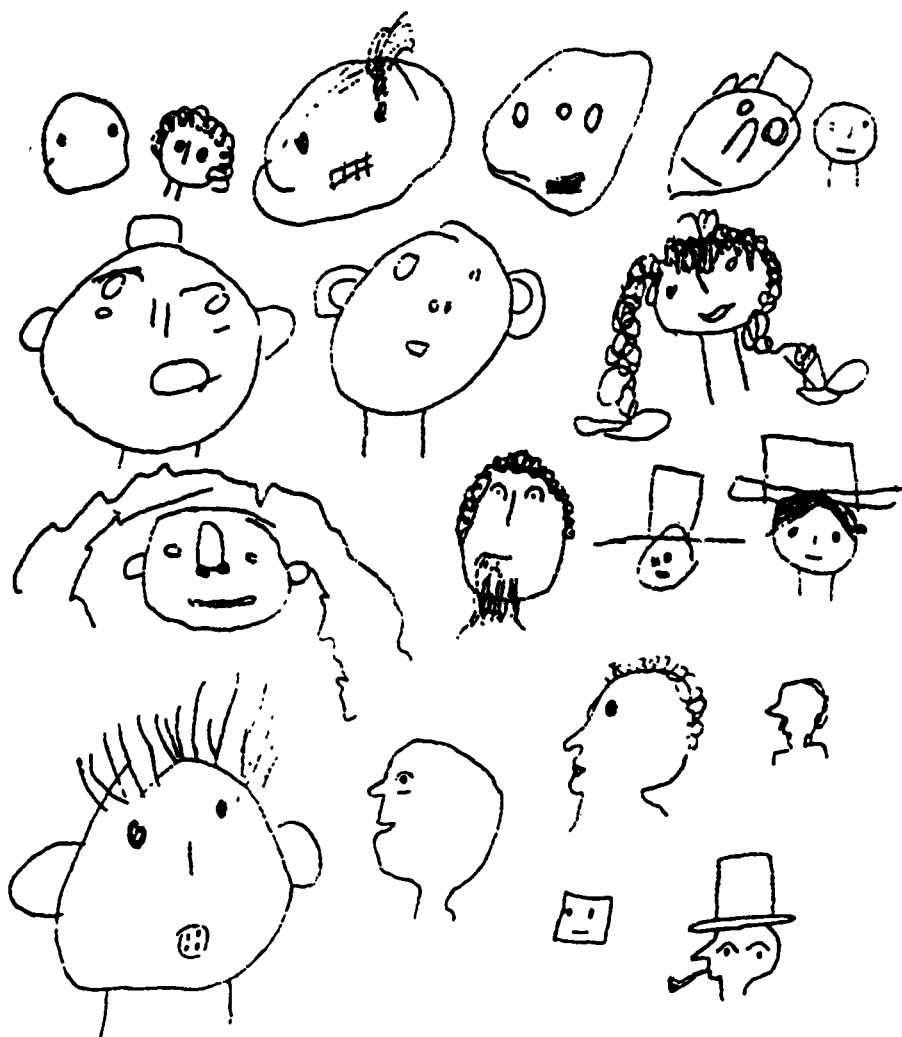
Certify that Ms. Seema Rani, En. No. X-9922 is a Research Scholar in the Dept. of Fine Arts, A.M.U.. She may kindly be allowed to collect the research material pertaining to her research entitled as "Art and Thought of Ravandrnath Tagore and His Influence on Contemporary Paintings.


(Dr. (Ms) Madhu Rani)
Chairman















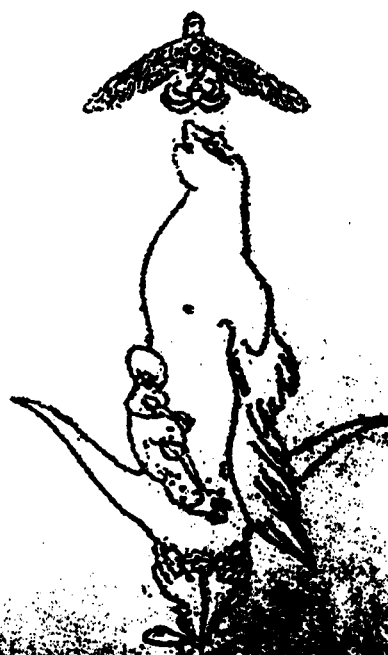
A DRAWING PRODUCED WITH PSYCHIC AID.

Austin O. Spare and Frederick Myers have applied the psycho-analytic theories of Freud, Jung and their school as an aid in releasing the cramped and suppressed imaginative faculties of the modern artist.



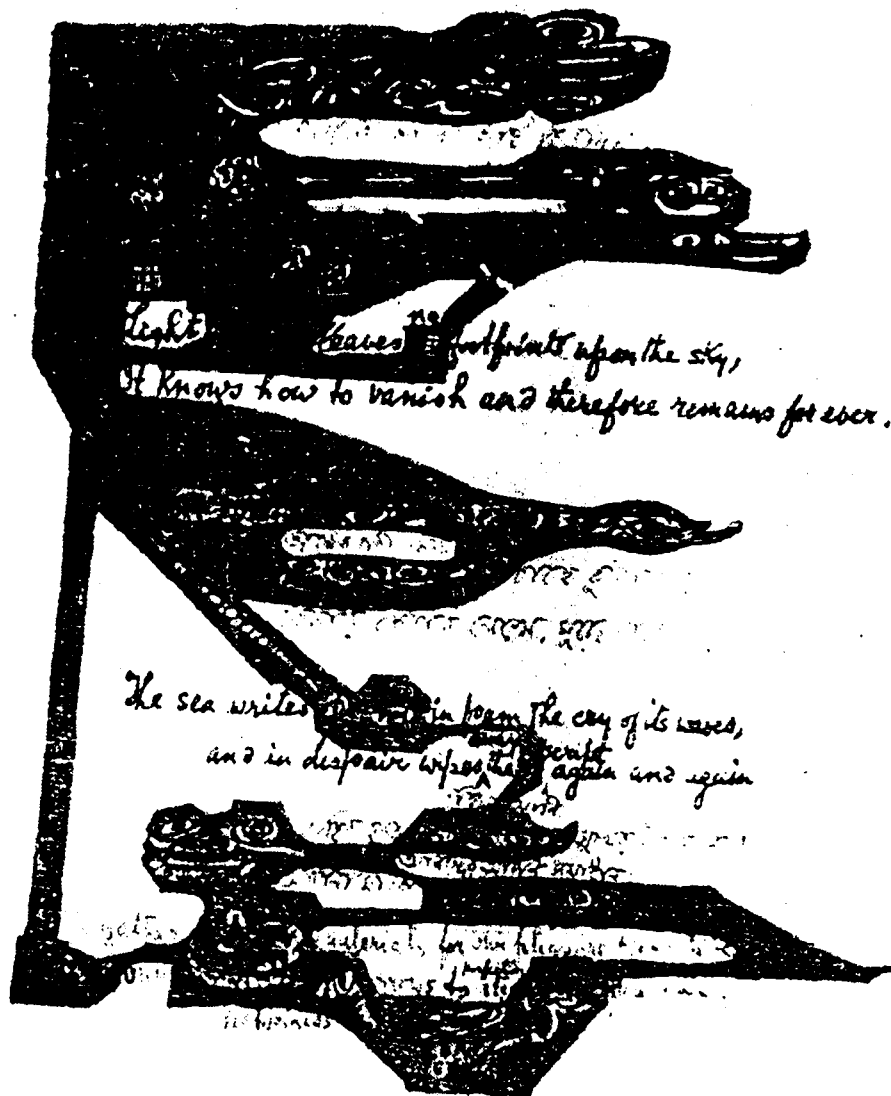
A DREAM DRAWING.

Here is an illustration of a vision conceived during the course of an experiment in auto-



A drawing produced with psychic aid. The figure is a nude female figure standing, holding a long, dark, flowing object that resembles a snake or a long hair. The drawing is rendered in a style that is both expressive and somewhat sketchy, suggesting a dynamic or psychic state. The background is dark and textured, with some faint, illegible text visible in the lower left corner.

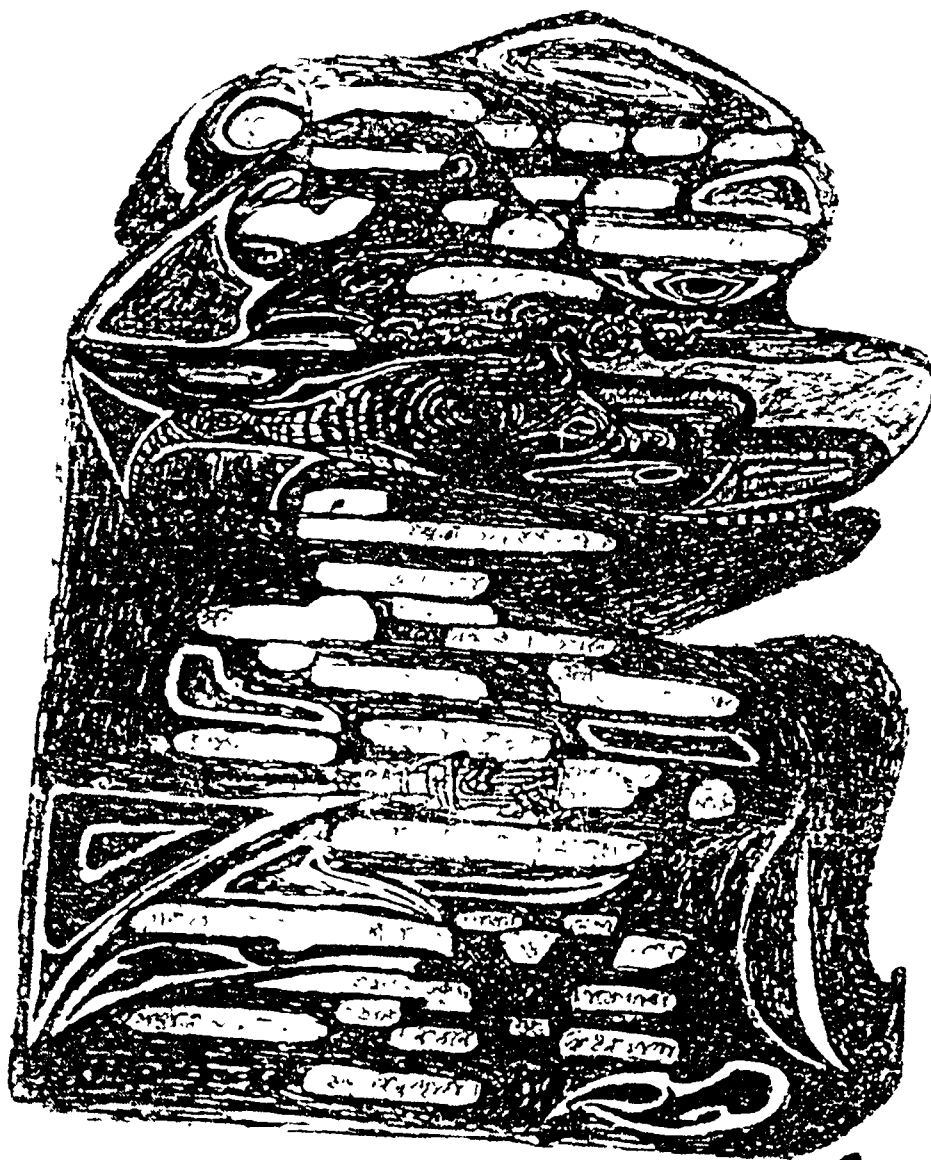




Light leaves ^{no} footprints upon the sky,
It knows how to vanish and therefore remains for ever.

The sea writes in foam the cry of its waves,
and in despair upon the ^{white} agate and again



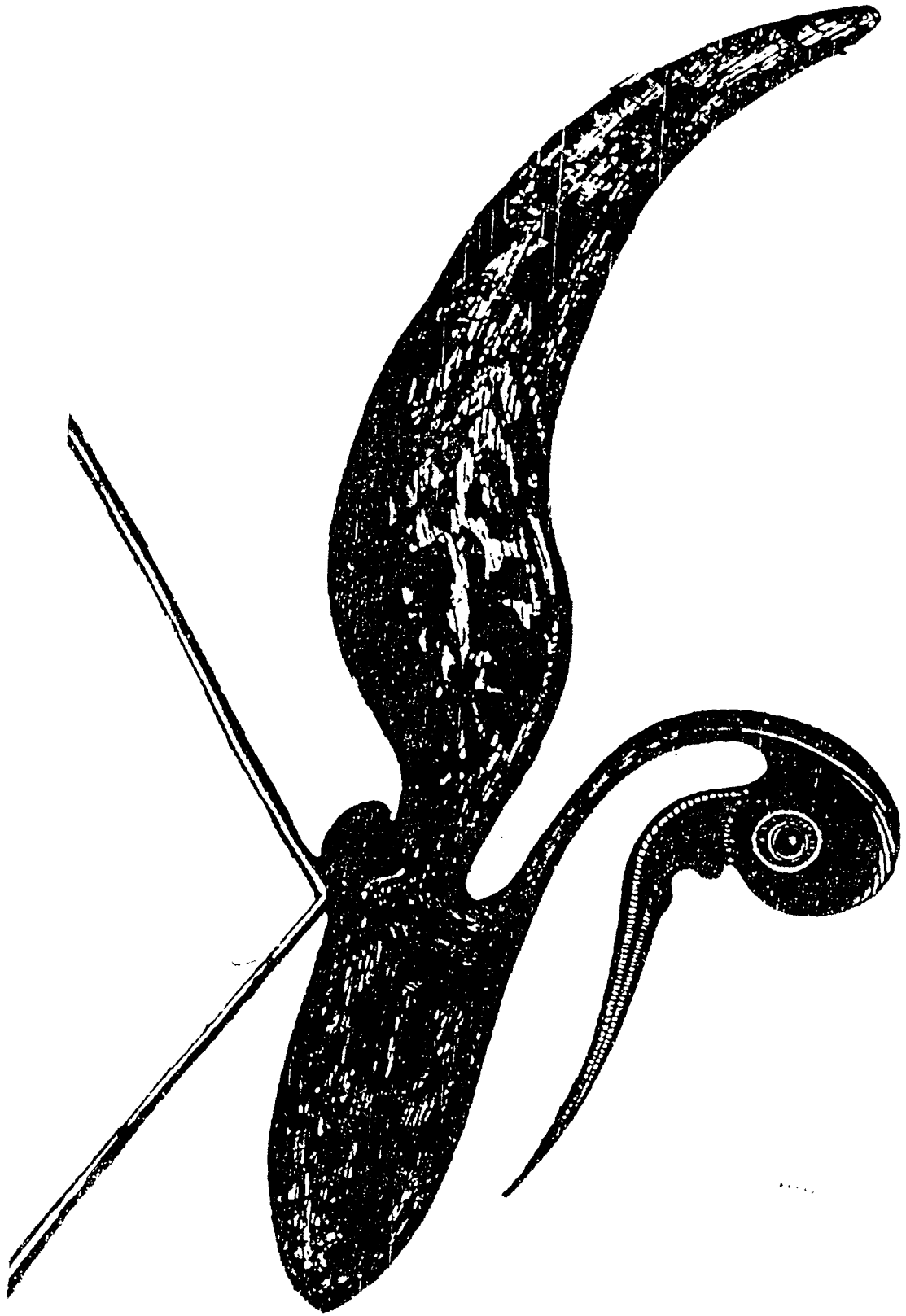


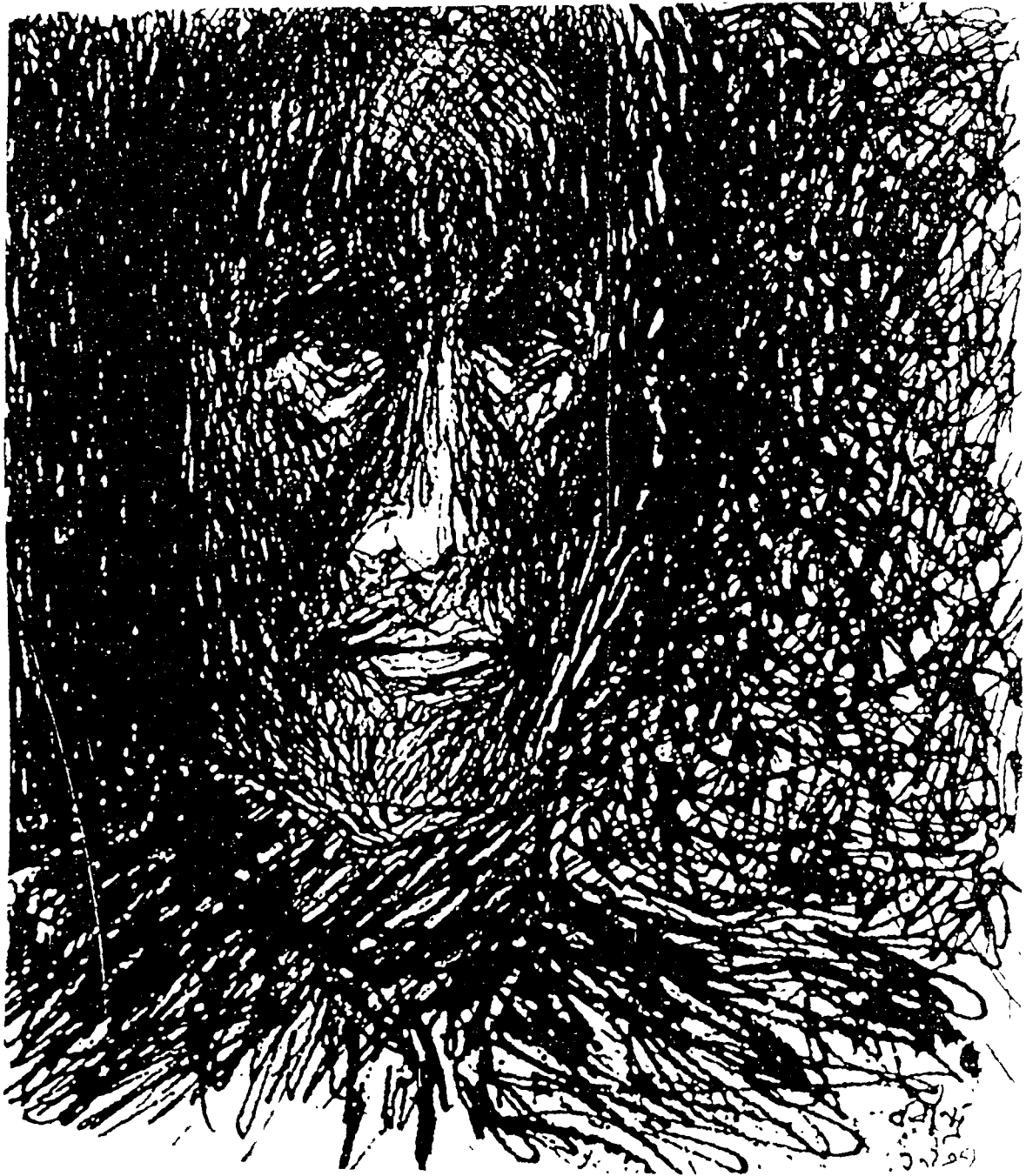




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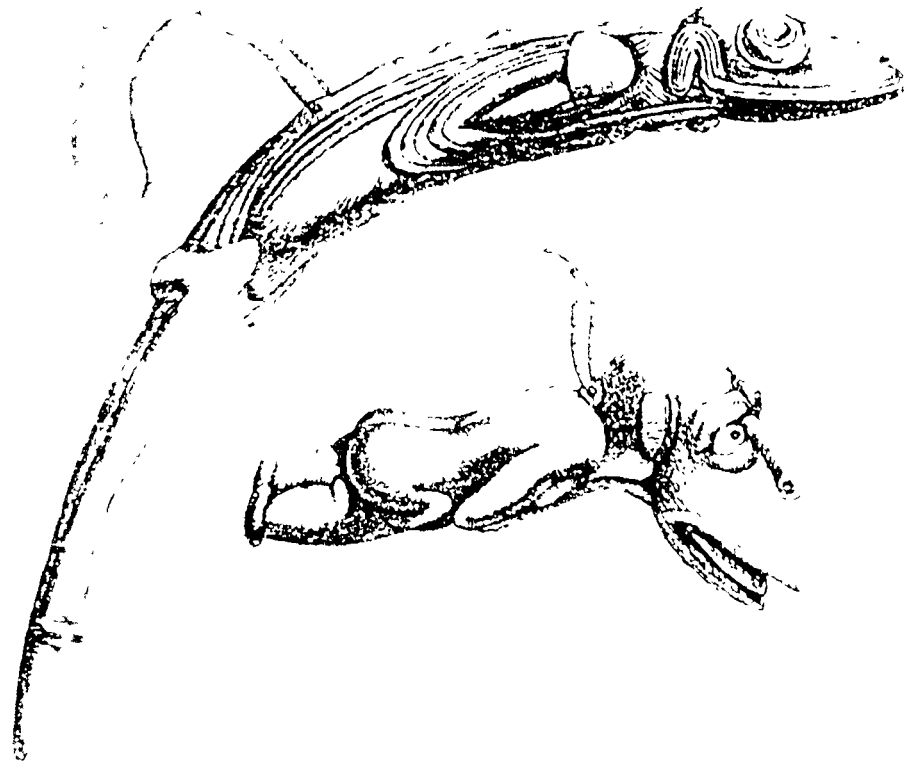


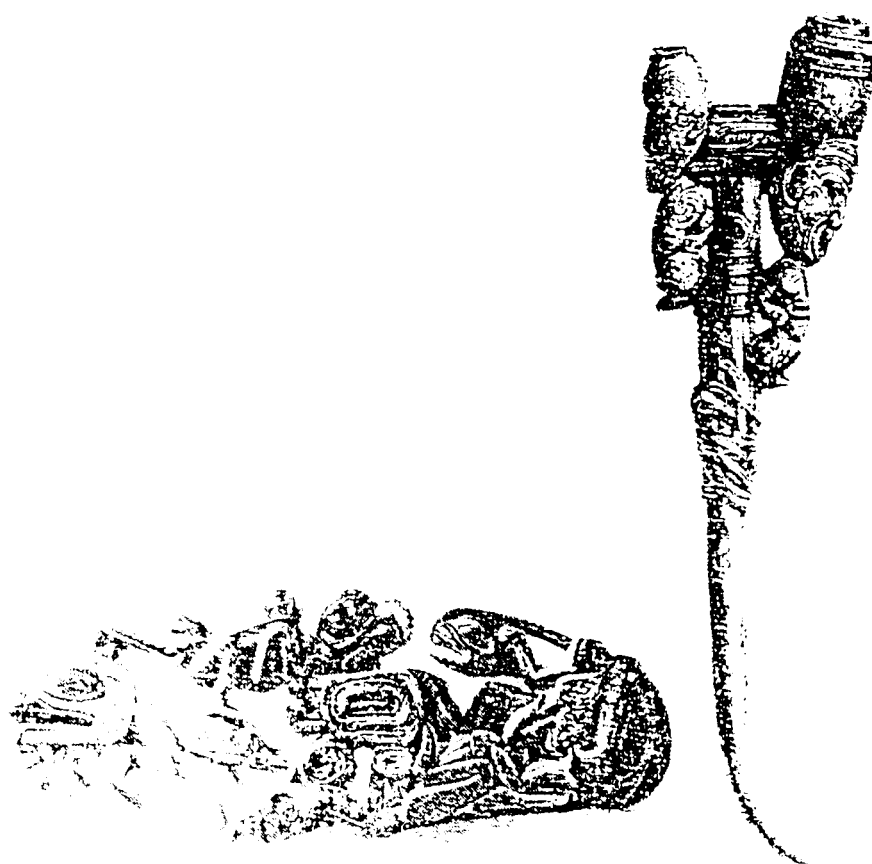
HEAD STUDY Pen and ink on paper

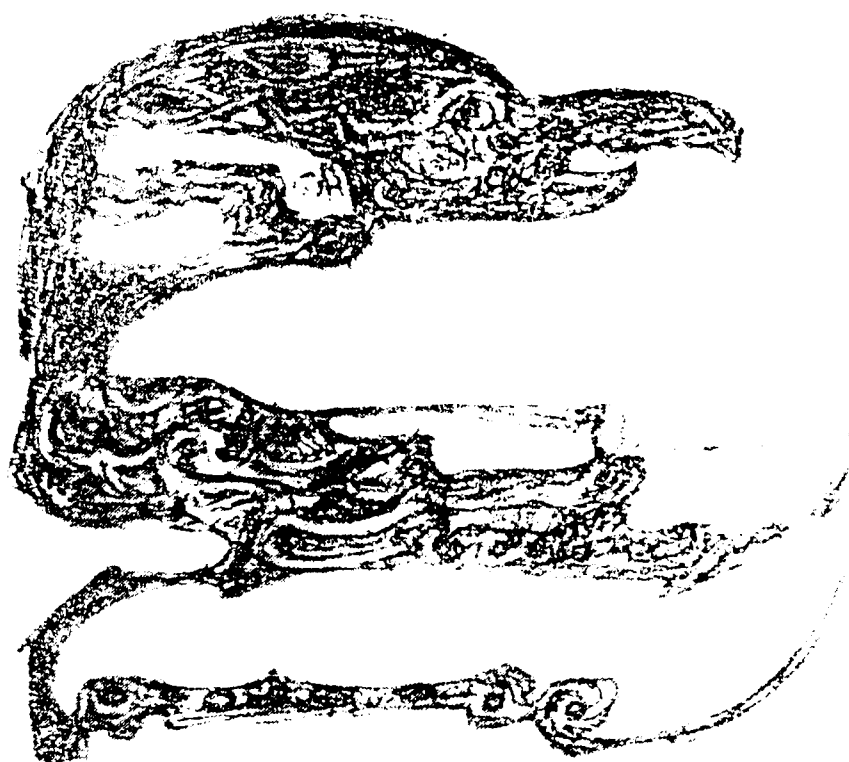


SEATED WOMAN. Etching print on paper











2/23/64

